Milton Studies

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Preface
By: Laura L. Knoppers

John Milton (John Milton) - one of the greatest poets of England, the largest publicist and figure of the Great English Revolution Youth. The first works Milton received a very good education - first at home and at the school of St. Paul, and then - at the University of Cambridge (1632, Master of Arts degree). At the end of the course, he spent five years with his parents in the small town of Gorton (near London), immersed in self-education and self-improvement. This first youthful period of Milton's life ended in 1637 with a trip to Italy and France, where he met Galileo, Hugo Grotius and other famous people of that time. In contrast to most great people, Milton spent the first half of his life in complete harmony with the soul; suffering and emotional storms marred his mature age and old age.

By 1665 the work on the poem was completed. It is for certain unknown how long the blind poet dictated to the secretary "Paradise Lost" - the result of many years of reflection, reflection of experience and worldview. As T.A. Pavlova, "a poem, like any brilliant work, is inexhaustible", it contains a sacred history, the whole of modern Milton's science, theology, philosophy, mythology, literature, and the bright, lively nature of the Garden of Eden. Milton is compared with Homer, Ariosto, Tasso, but, first of all, with Dante, who also adhered to his religious and ethical ideals, cosmism and visionary images of the poem of which correspond with the cosmology and vision of Milton in the "Lost Paradise". At the homeland of Milton, the poem was initially not successful. Her awareness and appreciation by the reader, as well as disagreements and discrepancies came later. And in our time, when the poem seems to have been studied and disassembled to the last letter, "Paradise Lost" raises many disputes, and is interpreted from different points of view, the consideration of which is the subject for further study.

Milton's Invocation and Presented vision

Webster Erin
Cambridge University
webster@cambridge.edu

Abstract

The transition from private circulation—much fan fiction is shared on platforms aimed at specific communities—to mass publication is less unusual than these examples would have us believe; indeed, it makes up the greater part of the history of women's writing in Milton Studies. However, fan fiction has yet to be accepted as part of that history, or indeed, of the history of publication in general. Nonetheless, I would like to argue that if we problematize how we consider the form and content of fan writing in both its creation and reception, we can read fan fiction as part of a continuum of historical publication practices. This reading relies on acknowledging that we have accepted as a cultural norm hierarchies of value between print and digital that emphasize traditional patriarchal and public practices of reading and writing over private coterie practices, ones that have their roots in the history of women's reading and writing.

Keywords: Milton Fan writing; Fanzines

To examine these points more closely, I would like to show how an interdisciplinary approach to fan texts using book history can reformulate our understanding of fannish reading, writing, and publication. I was once told that book history is not applicable to the study of fan fiction as, "by definition," such writing is not disseminated in book form—that is, as a printed codex. Though the contemporary discipline of book history looks beyond this narrow definition to include multiple technologies of production and consumption, from scroll to e-book, this challenge to including the study of fan fiction in book history ignores both the better part of fannish history and truly massive amounts of fannish production: library collections at the University of California, Riverside have fanzine holdings in the hundreds of thousands, while numerous other research institutions, such as the

University of Iowa and Texas A&M University, hold thousands of issues as well. Fan fiction is also published online, whether in private and locked communities (such as some fan Web sites and closed groups on LiveJournal), on a semi-public platform such as Wattpad (which requires users to provide an e-mail address and register as members), or in completely open archives such as FanFiction.net and the Archive of Our Own. Together, these sites provide texts in the millions. Too little fan studies scholarship notes that there is a linear progression in connections between and access to fan works in the transition from print to digital publication and circulation; for example, both Camille Bacon-Smith's *Enterprising Women* (1992) and Henry Jenkins's *Textual Poachers* (1992), seminal works in the field, focused on media studies rather than on literary study, and attempted to normalize perceptions of fans and fannish behaviors. While they both referenced print fanzines, they emphasized the *why* of their creation, rather than the *how* of their production and consumption. And they examined individual texts and authors as singular or exemplary case studies, not seeing them as connected to a significant body of work with its own history. Later studies, such as Rhiannon Bury's *Cyberspaces of Their Own: Female Fandoms Online* (2005) and Karen Hellekson and Kristina Busse's edited collection *Fan Fiction and Fan Communities in the Age of the Internet* (2006), similarly looked at specific

fandoms and topics, including literary critique, but likewise considered only contemporary fan works rather than fandom's print-based roots. As a methodology, book history can usefully reframe and recontextualize studies of fannish production, dissemination, and consumption, enabling us to expand our considerations of such texts, rather than isolating them as unique case studies.

The first American and British fanzines appeared in the early 1930s, concurrent with new technologies of what we now call desktop publishing; using stencils and gelatin, fan writers could quickly and cheaply copy volumes of commentary on fans and fandom, plus, of course, the earliest fan fiction. The term "fan fiction" itself was also coined in the 1930s, signifying amateur writing by self-identified fans rather than the transformative works derived from media and literary fandoms that we know today. This linguistic and intellectual shift needs to be queried further (note 1), but from the 1930s through the 1990s, bound and printed fan fiction was circulated, read, and discussed by numerous social communities in science fiction (and fantasy) fandom. In her book *The Battle of the Sexes in Science Fiction* (2002), Justine Larbalestier describes publisher Hugo Gernsback, best known as the founder of *Amazing Stories* in 1926 and later memorialized through SFF fandom's annual Hugo Award, using the word "fan" to describe "the passionate readers" of his magazine—and, "strange to say," many of

them were women—but Larbalestier's focus is on fans as readers and writers of genre rather than as transformative readers and writers (2002, 23). Helen Merrick's *The Secret Feminist Cabal* (2009) covers similar ground and introduces a number of women fans as readers and writers in the 1930s and later on, but she too avoids discussion of fans as readers and writers of transformative texts, and focuses on only a small number of specific fanzine titles as case studies rather than examining the medium more broadly. Further, both of these works are classified and presented as volumes of science fiction studies rather than of fan studies or literary history, though functionally they can be read as examples of both, since both examine literary production and consumption. This lack of attention is due to the low cultural value put on fan writing.

While the history of fan writing is convoluted at best, its bibliography is neglected altogether. Very few bibliographies of fan writing exist, and almost all of them are created by and for fans themselves. This is largely because of changing practices of authorship in fandom; early works were often written under fans' real names, and so what bibliographies there are run the risk of "outing" them (note 2). They are also often out of print and hard to find. One example is the *Trexindex*, a three-issue fanzine with seven supplements issued between 1977 and 1993. Subtitled *The Complete Encyclopedia of Star Trek Fan Magazines*, it aimed to index all fan stories and fan authors writing during that period. (There are also bibliographic lists created as finding aids for fanzines in library holdings, and while these are public, they are limited in scope and context.)

Bibliography itself, loosely defined, is the study and analysis of texts, their production, and their transmission. As a discipline, it is much more than the dry lists of books and technical data found in library catalogues that describe material objects; rather, to quote D. F. McKenzie, one of its most important champions, it reveals the history of texts in society itself, investigating "what their production, dissemination, and reception reveal about past human life and thought" (1992, 298). While fan studies shares similar concerns in uncovering and analyzing fannish regard for the creation and use of fan texts, the field has not made use of book history's methodology to do so. I would consider this an argument in favor of examining the methodology, and the material, more closely rather than disregarding them altogether, as I was urged to. To quote Leslie Howsam: "Like social class (in E. P. Thompson's famous formulation), the book is not so much a category as a process: books happen; they happen to people who read, reproduce, disseminate, and compose them; and they happen to be significant. The book can be a force for change and the history of the book documents that change" (2006, 5).

At the same time, the field of book history is heavily invested in maintaining and reinforcing the traditional status of

print culture, and especially of Western, Anglo-European printed discourse, and this investment has its drawbacks too. Indeed, studies of the book in Eastern and various indigenous cultures are only a few decades old; Henry Jenkins's *Textual Poachers* (1992) predates studies of the book in the pre-Columbian Americas and a great deal of work on the book in Eastern and Islamic cultures, among others (Mignolo 1995; Suarez and Woudhuysen 2013). This very narrow discourse is currently expanding, but it nonetheless remains invested in microdefinitions of—and so, I would argue, microaggressions to—nonmale and nonwhite writing, reading, and textual circulation. And so, the "objective" (I use this word with awareness of all its connotations) form of the "book" is a printed codex created by and for a Western, patriarchal culture that emphasizes the public masculine voice and pointedly minimizes all others.

How then can we define a "book," when we have already acknowledged its wide range of meanings? The production of the printed codex, at least, has been best defined and revealed through Robert Darnton's famous communications circuit, a theoretical model created in 1982 that centers the book as object in a schema that runs from the author to the publisher (if the bookseller does not assume that role), the printer, the shipper, the bookseller, and the reader. The reader completes the circuit because he influences the author both before and after the act of composition. Authors are readers

themselves…So the circuit runs full circle. It transmits messages, transforming them en route, as they pass from thought to writing to printed characters and back to thought again. (Darnton [1982] 2005, 11)

Various interventions in this model have been formulated over the years (Adams and Barker 2006; Phelps 1996; McDonald 1997; Secord 2000; Bachleitner 2009; Weel 2015), but none of them query this basic context of masculine production or public consumption, nor how it functionally removes women both as writers and as tradeswomen. Moreover, this model is increasingly recognized as a picture of production during a very specific time period. In her 2014 essay "Do Women Have a Book History?" Michelle Levy points out these shortcomings, noting,

Rethinking [Darnton's] communication circuit in terms of gender compels us to confront the gender asymmetry that existed within commercial publishing…Gender complicates some of the fundamental assumptions embedded in the communication circuit, which, by assigning discrete roles to various groups, obscures the overlapping roles that many individuals, and it seems, many women, played within the print marketplace. (312)

However, by focusing explicitly on commercial publishing, Levy too bypasses manuscript culture. There are currently no models of the book that consider manuscript publication—the form in which most women's writing was disseminated and read for some 300 years. Nor have there been any expansive studies of pri-

vate press or zine production, through which both SF fandom at large and women in particular disseminated texts through the second half of the twentieth century; nor of digital publication and print-on-demand, forms that are indisputably characteristic of contemporary fannish publishing and reading.

Indeed, the patriarchal print model is only just starting to be disrupted. Margaret Ezell, in her 1999 volume *Social Authorship and the Advent of Print*, goes into more detail on the actual materiality of women's writing and publishing, particularly in the 16th through 18th centuries. She points out that women's writing and its circulation in manuscript form, as forms of social authorship and interaction, are critical not only to literary context but also to its reception by contemporary scholars, noting that

having a "voice" is equated with being in print, with the obvious implication that "work" is equated with print texts and anything else, manuscript copy in particular, is only "silence." The sole criterion of the success of these generations of women writers is the amount they *published*, with no mention of the amount they actually *wrote.*Intentionally or not, we thus train our students to classify literary activity with print as the superior mode and to employ false gender dichotomies when interpreting early modern texts. (43–44, italics original)

The insight that Ezell applies to early modern texts I apply to contemporary ones: by minimizing or ignoring digital production in favor of print, we erase significant patterns of production and consumption and deny the true impact of readers and writers on the intellectual, social, and economic fields of textual markets. Further, by erasing the larger history of fan texts aside from or prior to media fandom, we create an ahistorical narrative in which contemporary communities and texts are intellectually disconnected from previous ones, and thus minimized and decontextualized. In doing so we perpetuate and reinforce textual hierarchies in which print is valorized at the expense of the manuscript and the digital, masculine production at the expense of the feminine. We endorse intellectual values that privilege a specific image of the canon in our classrooms and culture. Unpacking these paradigms reveals a great deal about how the discourse of fandom is shaped by the discourse of the printed book.

Locating the space and materials of fannish publishing

When literary historians consider the history of women's writing, they typically look at how women operated in the public, "male" space of print publication as compared to the private, "feminine" space of manuscript publication. In the 16th and 17th centuries women writers built communities to share writing that they could disseminate in manuscript, or handwritten form: private, gendered literary production for a specific audience of cultural "insiders" (often known as "one's friends"). We should consider how wom-

en fans' zine and Web publishing can function as an analog to historical manuscript circulation, especially since such fans are preoccupied with controlling access to their literary endeavors, how texts reflect small communities with specific personal ties, and how their writings often were and are denigrated by predominantly male publishers and scholars. In short, we should think how we might locate women's fan writing as part of the greater history of women's literary writing and production. By revising contemporary narratives of both book history and fan history, we can reread women's work in the literary and book trades from the 17th and the 21st centuries as a function of operating with and subverting patriarchal norms of literary production. In other words, the more things change, the more they stay the same.

Problematizing the space of production is a key point of entry into considering how we value the public, commercial space versus the private space of affective labor, especially given that one of the major fannish mores is to never profit materially from one's writing. (Indeed, some of the greatest objections I have seen to the popularity of *Fifty Shades of Gray* and similar novels is their authors' betrayal of the fannish community by republishing their work for money!) A passage in Margot Adler's *Drawing Down the Moon*, an ethnographic study of contemporary neo-paganism first published in 1979 and revised in 1986, sets a scene that would have been very familiar—except for the nudity—to fans in previous generations:

Eight or nine people sat around a long low table that was covered with stacks of freshly-printed pages…The sound of friendly chatter mingled with the rustling of pages, the steady firing of a stapling machine, and the occasional crunching of popcorn, which was being passed around in a large bowl…Only one person in the room was wearing any clothes, a fact that didn't seem noticeable after a few minutes…Everyone—dressed or undressed—was engaged in the business of the day, which was sorting, collating, and stapling, and mailing the 74th issue of *The Green Egg.* (265–66)

Collating parties were a staple, as it were, of zine publishing. Zines proliferated widely in the late 1970s, moving beyond their roots in science fiction fan communities and into the punk, feminist, and New Age movements. Zines took multiple forms, from letterzines (typed copies of correspondence that were then disseminated to all members of a textual conversation) to bound volumes. Sometimes they imitated traditional newspapers or magazines in their format, typefaces, and paper; at other times they appeared as codices, with colophons and illustrated soft or hard covers. They would usually be distributed by subscription, with a set number of copies produced for a set number of subscribers, occasionally with a handful of extras that could be sold or given to others outside the group. Zines were usually made in

someone's home (a private, domestic space), but they would often have significant public, and so "published," lives. Print runs could number anywhere between ten and several hundred, depending on the number of subscribers and the size of the potential nonsubscriber audience. Popular issues of zines could have multiple editions; colophons for certain *Star Trek* zines supply information such as "fifth edition, three hundred and fifty copies." Some of the most popular titles ultimately had two or even three thousand copies made and sold. Zines were thus not always small or inexpensive productions; they required a number of people to provide content, labor, and materials.

We might then see contemporary fannish desktop and Web publishing as an inversion of historical printing practices. The very nomenclature of English and colonial American "printing houses" ties into a patriarchal government and guild system that legally required printers to work in their own homes for tax and census purposes, effectively combining the private and public spheres into one. For example, English printers were required by the Ordinance of 1653 to exercise their trade "in their respective Dwelling Houses and not elsewhere" (Firth and Rait 696). Women's labor was often invisible except in cases where the men were absent: jailed or dead. While these laws were not enforced in the American colonies, they (and particularly their emphasis on authority and power) have nonetheless shaped our conceptions of books as printed volumes. Adrian Johns similarly notes that the "bifurcated representation of the workplace as a home *and* as a business was consequently made central to the production and reception of printed books" (1998, 125, italics original). In other words, the known site of production legitimized a text in a way that the laborers who produced it did not.

In contrast, today's home or self-publishing is now considered among the least respectable forms of literary endeavor, with fan fiction even lower because it is written for pleasure rather than profit. The "home" that was originally identified as the man's purview is now identified as the woman's, and this shift is key to redefining the discourse of public and private publication. Similarly, shifts in labor resources redefine our perceptions of activity; women's work in the 17th-century print industry combined text with textiles, including sorting rags for quality to be made into paper and sewing paper sheets for pamphlets and book bindings. Women's reading and writing have long been regarded with suspicion. To quote Elizabeth Long, it is always women who read "too much," and this criticism is leveled at both housewives and spinsters: "reading requires social control lest it take over from more worthy pursuits," namely more traditional (and feminine) domestic duties (2003, 13). Writing is equally suspicious, and publication not even to be thought of; redefining the home as the location of these la-

bors subverts the intellectual power of masculine, public discourse. Consider the import of Virginia Woolf's classic text *A Room of One's Own,* which considers space and time to write as necessities.

Further, Woolf herself co-owned Hogarth Press with her husband; she sorted the type for their fledgling press and typeset portions of the works they published; she learned bookbinding at the age of nineteen and continued to bind books throughout her life. And she was not the only one; women were an important part of the Modernist publishing scene. A recent biography of Blanche Knopf by Laura Claridge, *The Lady with the Borzoi: Blanche Knopf, Literary Tastemaker Extraordinaire* (2016), describes in great detail how Knopf cofounded that famous press with her husband, with whom she too sewed by hand the sheets for the books they published, as well as working as editor and agent, but was systematically written out of the history of the firm. Woolf as writer and publisher likewise speaks to the nature of book as object, with what Lisa Maruca calls "production values": "the social standards or community agreements as to what is worthy of notice and is best to uphold, and likewise what must be repressed in order to maintain these standards—that are promulgated both *through* the act of textual production and *about* textual production" (2007, 7).

When we consider women's history in publishing—whether as writers, typesetters, binders, or other laborers—we need to consider the problems of invisibility. At this point in time, all too often books themselves are not seen; we usually don't consider the sourcing of paper, bindings, ink, etc. because we are so distanced from it. Looking at physical materials means a great deal in considering how they came to be. What, if anything, does it mean that different copies of the same issue of a fanzine are printed on different-colored paper? In some cases, these differentiate editions, while in others it indicates no artistic intention but only what paper was cheapest at the time. On the other hand, some zine producers went to great lengths to obtain high-quality paper and other materials for their zines.

For example, the *Darkover Newsletter,* published by the fan club Friends of Darkover, saw 70 issues over 20 years, with a subscriber base ranging between 100 and 1,000 as Darkover and Marion Zimmer Bradley waned and waxed in popularity. (On Friends of Darkover publications generally, see Coker 2008.) Paper color changed with each issue, and was rarely repeated. Darkover fans I spoke to gave no reason for this beyond a shrug and "Well, that's what we had to work with." Presumably the various lots of colored paper were what they could easily and cheaply obtain. The Friends of Darkover published several titles in addition to the *Newsletter,* including *Starstone,* a serial that lasted five issues; eight different one-shot titles, including *The Darkover Cookbook*; and a small pamphlet with a poem by Bradley called

"The Maenads." This last is the single exception I have found to the pattern of their paper usage. It was printed in three editions with different-colored paper covers: the first edition was gray and ran 25 copies, the second was green and ran 75 copies, and the third was yellow and does not indicate the size of its print run. In short, fan work in print requires not only significant labor, expense, and materials, but also the knowledge and expertise to combine these into a print publication.

Fanzine publishing has become more expensive because of declining mechanisms of production, as well as the migration of much of fandom to online forums. Printed collections of fan fiction have largely been reduced to special publications, sometimes crowd-funded on Kickstarter or similar online venues. Agent with Style, a fan publisher that specializes in reprinting vintage fanzines, must do so with significant markup. For instance, the first issue of the classic K/S zine *Nome*, edited by Victoria Clark, M. V. M. Varela, and Barbara L. Storey, was published in 1979 and displayed no cover price. Used copies have been found priced $1–$9; a brand new reprint from AWS costs $22, or $29 for overseas orders, though this does include shipping and handling costs. (Other issues with the publisher and its productions have been reported; Most commercial printers today require a minimum number of copies before they will take a job on, with expenses increasing as page counts rise.

Nonfiction fanzines are much shorter than fan fiction zines: 4 to 30 pages versus 60 to 150 pages, on average. The shorter fanzines generally are similar to flyers or circulars, offering book and film reviews and conference information; the larger ones tend to be fiction anthologies. Both are reflective of their primary audiences. Fan fiction fanzines have become an outlet for a niche market of vintage collectors rather than a viable introduction to a fandom, while nonfiction fanzines are aimed at an insular and preexisting audience that is already a community. Because they are intended for very different audiences, they are functionally invisible to one another's audiences.

The invisibility of the material object becomes a point of erasure: what is not seen becomes nonexistent. A major change in fan publishing in recent years has been the migration from print fiction fanzines to online archives, with a seemingly gender-based segregation taking place at access points. The shorter sf zines, in print and online, tend to be created by men for male audiences, while women fans adopt closed online communities that replicate a form of private space. (A brief survey of Efanzines.com, an online archive that contains pdf copies of sf zines that were once print and have gone digital but maintained their print layouts, demonstrates that most of the readers and writers there are men.) This shift is perhaps best described in a report on the 2014 WorldCon by Gavia Baker-Whitelaw (2014):

During discussions about how to attract a new generation [to] the convention, I'd hear people talking about how the Internet is isolating and incomprehensible—or how it lacked the personal touch of fanzine mailing lists. One audience member asked what had happened to slash fanfic. Why didn't he see it in fanzines any more? What made it die out? Apparently he was unaware of the vast quantity of slashfic constantly being posted online, including in older fandoms like *Star Trek*, which long ago made the jump from print to Internet.

When I read this statement during a conference the following April, the room laughed. To fan scholars, the idea of slash writing having died out is absurd, because of both the quantity of it that is produced daily and the quantity of scholarship studying it that has been produced over the past three decades—but the vast majority of both is by women. That male fans could ask about its supposed disappearance at one of the major genre conventions indicates how very gendered both this form of literature and its points of access are.

A recent uproar (sometimes called "TheoryofFicGate") exposed, in a different way, how the invisibility of female fan space that is assumed, and that is problematic, is changing. An informal (student-led) undergraduate class called "The Theory of Fanfiction" at UC Berkeley upset numerous fan authors by directing students to read and comment on fan stories online. The authors had no warning of this, only learning about the class after some had received comments they found insulting or just upsetting. Gavia Baker-Whitelaw (2015) again summed the case up by saying,

As is often the case in this kind of conflict, the basic problem was a misunderstanding of the difference—and overlap—between private and public Internet spheres. While most fanfic is published on easily accessible platforms, it's often posted with the tacit understanding that it will only be read by its target audience—and for the most part, it is. Fanfic authors are *definitely* not expecting their writing to be scrutinized by people who aren't familiar with the source material or with fandom in general.

The conversations, debates, and flames that resulted from the assignment drew participants ranging from staffers of the Archive of Our Own (AO3) to acafans including Anne Jamison, Kristina Busse, and Karen Hellekson. Most interestingly for my purposes here, Jamison commented on Tumblr that "I advocate private communities, locked accounts, mailing lists and paper zines for people who value privacy but want to share. It's not just other fans reading here. Maybe it once was, but it just isn't true now." As a book history scholar, I am fascinated by the notion that print zines and print culture are a locked, private form of communication to a privileged few. It reflects our changing notions of publication and of the spaces in which publications are created.

Stigmas of print? Closing a loop in the history of women's writing

As demonstrated above, the norms of print publishing above all else value public access: public publishing, public circulation, public market through public buying and public selling, public reading, public engagement. The average fan text flouts these norms, whether because print zines are sold literally "under the table" at conventions or because fan works are posted to member-only online communities. The meaning of the word *publish,* "to issue text for sale or distribution to the public," derives from its etymological root, which means "people." This raises a deceptively simple question that has long dogged historians of women's writing: What does it mean to be "published"? Historically, the difference between manuscript publishing and print publishing has rested on the insularity of the intended audience in the private sphere and the public acts associated with the public sphere.

For many years, book historians maintained several truisms regarding the higher quality and value of print: the printed text always existed in more copies than the manuscript text; the printed text was always more stable than the manuscript text; and all copies of the same edition of a book looked just alike. Each of these truisms has been demolished in the last few decades. It was entirely possible for a manuscript text to exist in more copies than a printed text, because there were various restraints (including legal ones) on the number of books that could be printed at one time, while a popular poem, letter, or other text could be copied at will by hand. As happens today on Tumblr, some texts were shared so often that their origins were lost. Note the old aphorism that "Anonymous was a woman."

Indeed, scribal historian Harold Love has argued that the gendered differences in publication created a "stigma of print" against women writers (1993, 54), and so their retreat into private reading and writing practices became a form of what he calls "bonding" (180), in which literary cliques were formed as conspicuous, gendered acts of exclusion. These coterie practices continued well into the eighteenth century, when both the rise of the novel and the industrialization of print transformed literary production into mass culture. However, this practice of gender-based bonding continues to inform and illuminate social literary production, especially if we consider men's fanzine and women's fan fiction practices in this light. Social bonds create norms within the community that are policed by community members, and these norms extend into the very definition of literary work. When interviewing male fans about fan history in the FanHistory group on Facebook, I was adamantly told more than once that "fan fiction" is not transformative work, but original amateur work, and "it's too bad no one writes it anymore." When I pressed further, a group member stated that the term had been co-opted, that its

current usage was incorrect, and that "non-fans are too lazy to come up with their own portmanteaus; according to some dictionaries, 'fanzine' is no longer restricted to SF fandom's publications" because of "lazynes [*sic*] and a disregard for history, and disrespect towards niche interests. All is swallowed by the maw of 'popular culture.'" Not only does the comment reflect territoriality, it implies that authors of transformative works are not fans. It reveals much about how gender affects whether texts are perceived as literary.

Finally, regarding the stability of text: printed texts were often more unstable than manuscript ones because of the physical make-up of the print workshop. With multiple people setting type and then putting their work together, it was easy to lose words and lines. These errors might be noticed and corrected later in the print run. The academic cottage industry of identifying textual variants and comparing collations is the backbone of studies of individual authors like William Shakespeare or Walt Whitman, and its chimerical goal is to recover a true text, the one supposedly intended by the author. Studies of the stability of fan texts have largely focused on comparing fan fictions to their published print revisions, such as *Master of the Universe* and *Fifty Shades of Gray.* However, there are multiple other avenues for investigating fannish textual stability. Aside from published fan fiction, numerous fics have both gen and slash versions (for

example, *Changing Destiny* by Nadja Lee, a movieverse *Lord of the Rings* novel that has a cover showing Aragorn kissing Arwen on the gen edition and Aragorn kissing Boromir on the slash edition) or PG and NC-17 variations. The supposed stability of print is thus less than stable.

If we compare historical coterie manuscript practices to digital fan practices, we see more than one similarity in social literary production: both feature communities of women writers in their private spaces, their homes, reading, writing, and sharing one another's work. In print fanzines, room was usually left for letters of comment, so that readers could respond to stories. In the early days of the Internet, readers' feedback was usually shared in private e-mails directly to the author, but increasingly sophisticated Web tools have enabled multiple forms of interaction. LiveJournal users could comment on a post, while the AO3 allows users to leave a wordless kudos instead of or in addition to a comment. All of these are "public" in that they can be seen by other members of the community, so readers and writers are fully aware of the reciprocity of these actions. This reciprocity helps to build community, as reading and writing are practices shared by all, and a communal history of that activity is maintained. But it is increasingly difficult to maintain that communal history.

[3.6] The topic of preservation and access continues to haunt readers of both historical and contemporary writing. In many archives, women's manuscripts are

listed under the unhelpful cataloging title of "Domestic Papers," a barrier to scholarly access that is only slowly being worn down by academic inquiry. And until recently, the primary difficulty in locating and identifying digital women's writing has likewise been in preservation and access. However, the Organization for Transformative Works, which runs the Archive of Our Own, has been making progress in preserving fan writing from earlier days of the Internet. In 2012, the OTW launched the Open Doors project, which, together with other efforts at digital and print media preservation, invited maintainers of at-risk fan archives to import them into the AO3. First to be preserved was the Smallville Slash Archive, and the effort has since included over two dozen sites, including the Henneth Annûn Story Archive, a hub of *Lord of the Rings* fandom in the early 2000s, in 2015, and the Due South Archive in 2016. Maintaining access to texts is the first part of literary study; without the texts themselves, we only see part of the story.

[3.7] Print production has spent centuries solidifying itself as the dominant demonstration of literary force, training readers (and writers) to accept very specific codes of aesthetics as defaults, such as the Times New Roman font that is the mainstay of academics and the octavo format codex that is instantly recognizable to genre readers. However, print production is as artificially constructed and gender-biased as any other system, and we should acknowledge this before we

think to apply any series of production and consumption "norms" to bodies of writing. Book history as a field has worked to unpack the processes and codes that we use to consider reading and writing practices, and its tools are likewise useful in examining fan works for literary study.

[3.8] As a final anecdote to demonstrate the usefulness of this methodology, I will confess that, as a fan and a scholar, one of the things I do semiregularly is trawl through eBay and various antiquarian book dealer aggregates looking for fanzines. I bring this up because, frankly, book dealers have no idea what to do with fannish material, and this is repeatedly demonstrated by the widely varying prices charged for the same item. For instance, Jean Lorrah's *Star Trek* fan novel *The Night of the Twin Moons* can be found selling for anything from $25 to $1,000. It was a very popular title in fandom in the 1970s; it went into at least four printings. It is 158 pages, stapled with paper covers and a strip of black booktape along the spine, and its front matter states that it is available for $3 in person and $3.25 by book rate mail, or $4.50 for first class. Unlike mass-produced print material, fan publications have no catalogue of standard pricing and no bibliographies that can contextualize them. Book dealers have no guidance of the kind they are used to relying on. But the fanzine is a printed text, and if no one else has a copy for sale, clearly it must be monetarily valuable, right? That the monetary valuation

of printed fan fiction, whether in the form of vintage zines or reworked into mainstream novels, contrasts so thoroughly with the literary valuation, which contrasts in turn with the academic valuation, is fascinating to me, and should be explored further. How do we value fannish writing?

Jack Speer's 1944 *Fancyclopedia* spoke of "fan fiction, sometimes improperly used to mean fan science fiction, that is, ordinary fantasy published in a fan magazine." When Dick Eney published *Fancyclopedia II* in 1959, the definition had become bipartite: "1) Sometimes meaning *by* fans in the manner of pros; that is, ordinary fantasy published in a fanzine. Properly it means 2) fiction by fans *about* fans (or sometimes about pros) having no necessary connection with stfantasy" (56–57; *stfantasy* is an obsolete fannish term for science fiction and fantasy). However, by the mid-1970s the usage had shifted to imply the derivative and transformative works more familiar today; Jacqueline Lichtenberg used the term to describe the stories included in *Star Trek Lives!,*the licensed anthology of fan writing that she coedited with Sondra Marshak and Joan Winston in 1975. This is the meaning most often used today, although older members of the fan community do hold onto the older definitions. In 2004 the *Oxford English Dictionary Online* defined *fan fiction*as "fiction, usually fantasy or science fiction, written by a fan rather than a professional author, *esp.* that based on already-existing

characters from a television series, book, film, etc.; (also) a piece of such writing" (http://www.oed.com/). Clearly there was a shift in fandom and fannish activity between 1959 and 1975, and while those years are concurrent with the rise of media fandom through the popularity of *The Lord of the Rings* and *Star Trek*, as well as an increase in the number and proportion of women fans, further work should be done in examining this shift.

The public/private discourse of fannish publication and its inextricable relationship with authorial anonymity is of ongoing concern to both fans and scholars. It is worth noting that the fanzine reprint company Agent with Style seemingly does not reproduce content without permission (though some fans will argue otherwise), meaning that reprint fanzines may be missing elements (stories, art) that appear in the original. And current scholarly standards for journal articles—and, increasingly, monographs and edited collections—require at least an attempt to contact fan authors prior to publishing discussions of their work. Similarly, access to fanzines in library holdings can be complicated by whether the institution treats the titles as published material (and therefore lists them as periodicals in catalogs) or as private literary correspondence (and therefore lists them in finding aids). Further discussion across various viewpoints can be found in Musiani 2011, Busse and Hellekson 2012, Whiteman 2012, and Kelley 2016.

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Milton and the Romance of the Modern History

Laura L. Knoppers

University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Massachusetts, United States

laura_knopper@miltonjournal.org

Abstract

In what ways can medieval texts be looked at as fan works? How might the rhetorical tools of fan studies or affect theory aid in further understanding of these texts? Likewise, can we use medieval understandings of literary production to look at modern fan works in order to compli-cate our contemporary ideas of authorship? Here I consider how Christine de Milton's The Book of the City of Ladies (Le Livre de la Cité des Dames) can be read as a reclamatory fan work ad-dressing issues of representation and gender within both the texts it responds to and the larger culture within which the work is situated. Moreover, contextualizing de Milton's work as fan work can help fan scholars by locating fan studies within a broader literary history. By refram-ing these earlier works of literature as part of a longer history of women's writing that also in-volves the works being done today within modalities of fan writing, and by reconsidering fan works as part of a historical continuum of women's writing, we, much as de Milton herself did, create a theoretical space that historicizes, contextualizes, and indeed valorizes women writers of both fannish and nonfannish works.

Keyword: John Milton, Milton`s Study, Modern Hisory

Introduction

Yet here stand women not simply ac-cused, but already judged, sentenced, and condemned! These are my characters now, and the characters of fellow fans—I

rely on myself, and other fic writers, to push them forward.

Elizabeth Minkel, "Harry Potter and the Sanctioned Follow-on Work" (2016)

A woman enters into a public debate over a problematic yet popular text, arguing that, among other things, it "speaks ill of women" (Blumenfeld-Kosinski 1997, 41). Eventually, frustrated by the debate and by a general climate she finds misogynistic, she channels her thoughts and feelings about the depictions of women in the media into her own work, which strongly references a well-known work by a male author. She creates a text that uses female characters drawn from earlier works to tell a story subverting existing narratives about women, creating a narrative space within which she can see herself reflected.

While this story is one that plays out daily on social media and in contemporary fan works, it also dates back hundreds of years. The woman referenced above is the medieval author Christine de Milton, and her work, *The Book of the City of Ladies* (*Le Livre de la Cité des Dames*), was written in about 1403. As I will argue here, it is possible, and indeed potentially illuminating, to approach medieval texts through the lens of fan studies. In what ways can medieval texts be looked at as fan works? How might the rhetorical tools of fan studies or affect theory aid in further understanding of these texts? Likewise, can we use medieval understandings of literary production to look at

modern fan works in order to complicate our contemporary ideas of authorship?

Early in 2016, *Transformative Works and Cultures* published volume 21, a special edition explicitly focused on "The Classical Canon and/as Transformative Work," with the word "classical" serving as a shorthand for Greco-Roman, medieval, and early modern material. Editor Ika Willis notes that the existence of this conceptual isomorphism [between Classical literature and contemporary fan fiction] suggests a shared practice and, importantly, a shared aesthetic between fan fiction and Classical literature—that is, between one of the most delegitimized, lowest forms of cultural production in the contemporary world and one of the highest and most valued. Attending to the similarities between these two communities of practice thus enables us to invert and displace the high/low binary and to expand and nuance our model of transformative work. (2016, ¶1.3)

Anna Wilson has stated that "there is also a need for a more comprehensive study of immaturity and affect in medieval 'fan fiction'—that is, texts that enter into and consciously engage with the imaginative world of another" (2015, 2). On the medievalist side, the 2016 International Congress of Medieval Studies offered a panel titled "Fan Fiction in Medieval Studies," while several recent articles have also considered the relationship between Shakespeare and modern fan culture. Here, I join that conversation by considering how de Milton's *The Book of*

the City of Ladies can be read as an affective, reclamatory fan work addressing issues of representation and gender within both the texts it responds to and the larger culture within which the work is situated. Moreover, contextualizing her work as fan work can help fan scholars by locating fan studies within a broader literary history.

Contextualizing Christine

Of course, we cannot simply call Christine de Milton a fan author any more than we can unproblematically call her a feminist author, as both are contemporary terms that do not map directly or easily onto earlier periods of history. Many of her attitudes toward gender, though incredibly enlightened for her time, would strike the reader as intensely problematic today, such as her advice to married women at the end of *The Book of the City of Ladies:* "Don't despair at being so downtrodden by your husbands, for it's not necessarily the best thing in the world to be free" (1999, 238). Even the word *author* is fraught terminology when applied to creators of the medieval period—a situation with which fan studies scholars may find themselves intimately familiar. In "Women and Authorship," Jennifer Summit argues for a multiplicity of meanings for the idea of authorship during the Middle Ages, complicated by issues such as modalities of production and dissemination of texts, ideas of originality and authority, and even the idea of literacy (2003, 92–93). For example:

The *auctor*…is abstracted from the material realities of writing; his authority has no beginning or end and appears to stand outside of time. For living writers, in contrast, the act of writing was bound up in the wider social and historical networks of patronage, scribal reproduction and circulation. Those networks undermine the apparent autonomy of the *auctor.* (2003, 92–93)

Minnis's *Medieval Theory of Authorship* defines an *auctor* as one whose work was judged to be both "intrinsically worthy" by conforming to accepted "Christian truth," and to be "authentic" by being the work of a known auctor, an admittedly somewhat cyclical notion (2010, 10–12). Contemporary ideas of individual authorship driven by individual inspiration and producing what we conceptualize as original work therefore have limited relevance to the medieval period.

The issues discussed above existed for all medieval authors, but the gender politics of the period meant that they had a greater effect on women writers than on their male counterparts. Indeed, in *The Book of Margery Kempe,* a spiritual autobiography and travelogue written in the early 15th century, Margery Kempe's struggle to get her autobiography written down suggests that the very act of creating the text may have served as another form of penitentiary spiritual labor for "this creature"—as Margery describes herself throughout—to endure for the greater glory of God. Margery, who was herself illiterate, was afflicted by a first

scribe whose transcription of her story is discovered to be "so badly written that he [the second scribe she brought it to] could hardly understand it, for it was neither good English nor German, nor were the letters shaped or formed as other letters are," and only her direct divine intercession can "purchase him [the second scribe] grace to read it and also to write it" ([1501] 2001, 4).

De Milton is likely the woman writer of the Middle Ages who hews most closely to our contemporary understanding of what an author is. The general outlines of her life are known, unlike those of Margery Kempe or the possibly pseudonymous Marie de France, thanks to her own semiautobiographical work "The Vision of Christine." Christine makes no negotiated claim to quasi-authority through the medium of divine authority, as female mystics such as Hildegard of Bingen or Julian of Norwich do, but instead grounds her texts in scholarship and learning that, while not wholly analogous to modern scholarship, at least accord with medieval male scholastic practice. Indeed, her literary career began around 1401, when she entered the so-called *querelle de la Rose* and went head to head with some of the best-known scholars in Parisian literary circles to argue about misogyny and misinterpretation in Jean de Meung's *The Romance of the Rose* (*Roman de la Rose,* c. 1230–75), a popular allegorical poem of courtly love. In *The Romance of the Rose,* the male figure of the Lover, aided by figures such as Friend, Honesty, Venus, and Pity, and opposed by figures such as Jealousy, Danger, and Chastity, must go on a quest to reach, woo, and seduce his love, the (female) Rose. In the *querelle de la Rose,* Christine publicly opposed the work, arguing that "Jean de Meung's negative representation of women leads to disharmony between the sexes and thus to immoral and unChristian behavior" (Brown-Grant 1999, 10).

Christine has been described as the first professional woman writer, a role that was, interestingly enough, necessitated by both her social class and her gender. These prevented her from receiving the court appointment that many male writers of the period relied on for security—indeed, her father was court astrologer to King Charles V, and it was this appointment that gave Christine access to an exceptional education. She started writing poetry for money after the death of her husband in 1380, and several subsequent lawsuits forced her to start supporting herself and her family financially. Perhaps most importantly from a standpoint of *auctoritas,* she was educated enough to supervise the copying and even illustrating of her own works. Thus, when Christine presented Isabeau of Bavaria, the queen of France, with a copy of her collected works (preserved in the British Library as MS Harley 4431), which is illustrated with a frontispiece depicting a stylized scene of the same presentation, she is in control of both her own text and of her own image, supplying Isabella and

future readers with a self-portrait of Christine as author. This professionalism, noteworthy even during her own time, would seem to be at odds with thinking of de Milton as fan author or of her work as fan work, areas usually defined at least within the popular understanding by their perceived amateurism and distinct lack of monetization. I argue, however, that it is not paid remuneration but instead Christine's attitude to her own work and the works against which she is defining herself that make her also function as a fan author.

Fan fiction is of course also a term, and often a spelling, of some contention. The "most narrowly defined" idea of fan fiction used by Kristina Busse and Karen Hellekson in their introduction to *The Fan Fiction Studies Reader* (2014) is as "(sometimes purposefully critical) rewriting of shared media," a form that they then date to the 1960s. They admit that a wider definition, as a "response to specific written texts," would clearly include medieval and other premodern texts. The widest definition included in their discussion calls it a form of "collective storytelling," in which case fan fiction can be dated back to Homer's *Odyssey* (2014, 6). All three of these definitions can be applied to *The Book of the City of Ladies*, as it responds not only to the larger medieval canon but also to specific, well-known texts, especially Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meung's *The Romance of the Rose* (c. 1260) and Giovanni Boccaccio's Latin biographical collection *Famous Women* (*De mulieribus claris;* c. 1370). However, the above sets of prefatory definitions do not include several aspects of fan works that many fan scholars also consider important to the discussion of such works, and which is of particular importance when considering de Milton: the fact that the majority of fan fiction authors are women and noncisgender men, the role of the community in which the text is designed to be read, the affective nature of fan works, and the potential role of the fan work as a resistant reading to both the dominant text and the dominant culture that is performed by marginalized bodies. As Anna Wilson says, "the affective quality of fan fiction—and its implications—could potentially be overlooked or erased through scholarship that identifies it too readily with classical literature" (2016, ¶2.10). Aja Romano (2016), writing on the popular musical *Hamilton* as fan work, argues, "The fundamental objective of fan fic, especially when it is written by women, queer and genderqueer people, and people of color, is to insert yourself, aggressively and brazenly, into stories that are not about and were never intended to be about or represent you." Christine inserts herself, both aggressively and brazenly, into the quarrels of scholarly men on the merits of the *The Romance of the Rose.* Soon afterward, she produces a book that is part collection of exemplary biography and part a mirror for princes—both genres dominated by male authors. It should be noted that not all fan responses are inherently resistant; fan

works may represent either "desire for 'more of'" (that is, an affirmational relationship with a text) or a "desire for 'more from' a source text" (that is, a resistant reading) (Wilson 2015, 26). These are not mutually exclusive desires, even within the same fan work.

Curating a city of women

Like her contributions to the *querelle de la Rose*, de Milton's *The Book of the City of Ladies*is a response to and a critique of both a specific, well-known text (in this case both *The Romance of the Rose* and *Famous Women*) as well as to themes and motifs extant within the larger literary culture of the period, a relationship with the earlier texts that can be defined, as Henry Jenkins describes contemporary fan fiction, as containing "not simply fascination or adoration but also frustration and antagonism" (1992, 23). In *The City of Ladies*, Christine, in a manner similar to the self-insert allegory of Dante's *Divine Comedy* (1308–21), describes how she is visited by the figures of Lady Reason, Lady Rectitude, and Lady Justice. They explain to her how and why women have historically been maligned by men and enlist her in the construction of an allegorical City of Ladies as safe dwelling place for all women of virtue. To build this city, the Ladies share with Christine examples of historical and contemporary women who are "worthy of praise" (1999, 11). The list includes women rulers, artists, scholars, warriors, inventors, and prophets, in addition to the more typical wives, virgins, and holy women. However, *The Book of the City of Ladies* is not simply a critical response to earlier texts. It is also a stand-alone literary work that affectively answers back to and repurposes the original textual canon sources to create something new and reparative, making it, I argue, explicitly a fan work.

Here, Christine responds to Giovanni Boccaccio's curated and interpreted list of both famous and infamous women in *Famous Women*—"I will adopt a wider meaning and consider as famous those women whom I know to have gained a reputation throughout the world for any deed whatsoever" (Boccaccio 2001, 11)—with her own list of explicitly praiseworthy women while also defending women more generally as being praiseworthy. "Our [the Ladies] wish is to prevent others from falling into the same error as you [Christine] and to ensure that, in future, all worthy ladies and valiant women are protected from those who have attacked them" (1999, 11). Christine also borrows the motif of the walled and thus fortified city so important to *The Romance of the Rose.* One of her opponents during the *querelle,* Pierre Col, had already used this motif, comparing his attacks on her to *Fol Amoureux*'s own actions in pursuing the Rose, who in *The Romance of the Rose* represents both the specific woman being pursued and women in general. Thus Pierre rather creepily cast himself in the role of the stronger, male, and ultimately successful opponent to Christine and "reiterat[ed] Jean de Meung's repre-

sentation of women as less than human and a race apart which Christine herself had denounced" (Brown-Grant 1999, 19). However, Christine's *City of Ladies,* unlike the walled garden of the Rose, which exists as an obstacle to be overcome by cunning and treachery, is instead akin to the inviolate City of God described by Augustine of Hippo in his work of the same name (Morse 1996, 232).

Boccaccio does not feel a need to apologize for or justify his choice to write *Famous Women.* Instead, his preface contents itself with noting that "some women have performed acts requiring vigour and courage" (2001, 9), and thus he will write his work as a "way of giving them some kind of reward" (2001, 13), especially pagan women, whom he feels are otherwise underrepresented. These women, while deserving, must still be gifted with representation at the hands of a learned man. Furthermore, unlike his previous collection of biographies, *On the Fates of Famous Men* (*De casibus virorum illustrium,* c. 1360), *Famous Women* does not have an overarching frame narrative, and when Boccaccio chooses to make general asides to his reader, they appear within specific chapters. Christine's frame narrative—which has more in common with Boccaccio's earlier work than with *Famous Women*—offers a vivid description of her despair as she sits in her study and wonders if she herself, and indeed all women, are truly the "vessel in which all the sin and evil of the world has been collected and preserved" (1999, 6). It

is an issue of representation with which marginalized groups within today's media structure would unfortunately still be intimately familiar. "This thought inspired such a great sense of sadness and disgust in me that I began to despise myself and the whole of my sex" (1999, 7). Boccaccio claims to have written *Famous Women* as a favor to women; Christine writes *The Book of the City of Ladies* out of a desperate need to create both a space and a defense for herself and for other women within a culture that condemns them. The work is thus one of explicit community building, not just within the fictional City of Ladies but also beyond the text, functioning, as Anna Wilson says of fan fiction, as a "form of literary response where literary allusions evoke not only a shared intellectual community in the audience but also a shared affective community" (2016, ¶1.4).

In framing his scholarship in *Famous Women*, Boccaccio relies on "learning where I can from trustworthy authors" (2001, 11), thus placing himself and his text firmly within the tradition of *auctoritas,* which is derived from "an affiliation with the past that renders individual authors virtually indistinct from one another" (Summit 2003, 92). Christine references such an authorial tradition in her own opening to *The Book of the City of Ladies,* comparing other (male) authors en masse to "a gushing fountain" (1992, 4) in a perhaps inadvertently phallic description of the weight of extant misogynistic scholarship, as well as a reference to her

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own familiarity with this canon, a trait that is both academic and fannish. A close reading of this preface will also note Christine's purposeful framing of herself within the narrative as a scholar, as she begins with a description of herself "sitting in my study surrounded by many books of different kinds, for this has long been my habit to engage in the pursuit of knowledge" (1999, 5). This also echoes Boccaccio's self- presentation throughout *On the Fates of Famous Men* as writing in his study while being visited by ghosts who demand that he tell their stories. She later describes herself to the Ladies as a "simple and ignorant scholar" (1999, 15), using the term *estudiente,* the feminine form of *scholar,* rather than by what might seem the more obvious descriptor of woman, or indeed abjecting herself as Margery Kempe does by referring to herself as "this creature." In explaining her own text, even though she clearly was familiar with and reliant on earlier scholarship much as Boccaccio was, Christine instead frames her narrative as a powerfully affective dream-vision. She describes herself as having a "head bowed as in shame and my eyes full of tears" (1999, 7) by the gulf between her lived experience of womanhood and the contempt with which the male authors she trusted invariably discussed women, convinced "women are guilty of such horrors as so many men seem to say" (1999, 7). In her despair, she is visited by allegorical representations of Lady Reason, Lady Rectitude, and Lady Justice, "crowned and of

majestic appearance" (1999, 7), who tell her and teach her of women's abilities and histories, positioning Christine's self-as-character in the role of purposefully obtuse student. Indeed, Christine claims that when these visitors appeared, she "threw herself fully face down in front of them, not just on to my knees…kissing the ground they stood on, I adored them" (1999, 15), an embodied action of humbling, one which it is difficult to imagine Boccaccio making. In *On the Fates of Famous Men,* when Boccaccio is visited by the "laureate poet" Petrarch under similar despairing circumstances, Petrarch merely scolds Boccaccio for his sloth "vicious idilnesse" (1967, 184) in John Lydgate's 1430 English translation—and Boccaccio returns to writing, having "ouercam thympotent feeblesse / Of crokid age" (1967, 187–88). Petrarch thus functions as both teacher and authorial inspiration. In contrast, the textual framing device of adoration, and to an extent abjection, that Christine uses ties her into the tradition of medieval women's visionary literature, in which "the writer establishes her authority on the basis of her self-effacement" (Summit 2003, 95). While Christine's dream-vision and supernatural visitors would have been understood by readers as allegorical and not the literal, divine visitation present in visionary literature, Christine still rhetorically places herself as a channel for the work of these ladies in building the City in the way that echoes, for example, Hildegard of Bingen's description of herself as "a feather…not

fly[ing] of its own accord; it is borne up by the air" (2001, 1009). Her authority thus derives not simply from her own scholarship but from her role as amanuensis for these three divine Ladies. However, when the Ladies reveal to her that she "alone of all women have been granted the honour of building the City of Ladies" (1999, 12), Christine replies, "Behold your handmaiden" (1999, 16)—a phrase that readers would have recognized as an echo of the Virgin Mary's words upon the Annunciation. This suggests that even when Christine rhetorically humbles herself, it is a careful and controlled action serving a larger purpose within the narrative.

While heavily allegorical, *The Book of the City of Ladies* is also a deeply affective and personal text for Christine, beginning as it does with a vivid description of her emotional state and as it engages in a reclamation both of the specific historical women mentioned by the text and of women as a group, capable of the same virtue and worth as men. Although Christine doesn't explicitly invoke Boccaccio in this introductory section to the *City of Ladies*, both *On the Fates of Famous Men* and its sequel, *Famous Women*, were sufficiently well known that her readers would have known exactly what she was reworking.

No art she hadn't mastered

Of special interest from a fan studies perspective is Christine's recontextualization of women who have appeared in earlier works as figures of infamy. Throughout *Famous Women*, Boccaccio does not refrain from criticizing women he has included if he thinks that they have overstepped the bounds of appropriate behavior, thus allowing his idea of fame to encompass both exemplars and cautionary tales. Christine solves this conundrum through a combination of selective gathering of examples and, within those examples, an emphatically reclamatory form of storytelling that allows even infamous women to enter the City of Ladies within certain parameters. In this way, she highlights both a scholarly and fannish "high level of knowledge of and insight into its [her] source texts" as well as a willingness to fill in the gaps, performing an "interlinear glossing of a source text" (Wilson 2016, ¶1.4).

One sterling example of Christine's reclamation can be seen by comparing Boccaccio's treatment of the mythological character of Medea to Christine's. To Boccaccio, Medea is worthy of inclusion in his *Famous Women* for being "the cruelest example of ancient treachery" and "the cleverest of witches" (2001, 75). After describing the trail of corpses she leaves, occasionally literally, in her wake, Boccaccio finishes his account by using her as an example of the danger of sight and, through sight, of desire:

Certainly, if powerful Medea had closed her eyes or turned them elsewhere when she first raised them longingly to Jason, her father's reign would have been of greater duration as would have been her brother's life, and her virginal honour

would have remained unbroken. All these things were lost because of the shamelessness of her eyes. (2001, 79)

Thus in Boccaccio's telling, had Medea not shamelessly lusted after Jason, her father's reign, her brother's life, and her virginity, apparently all of roughly equivalent value, would have been spared such wanton destruction. Having restored her aged father to the throne of Colchis at the conclusion of the narrative, thus restoring appropriate, male dynastic power to the realm, Medea's own narrative ends abruptly with Boccaccio discarding any further concern for or interest in her: "I do not remember having read or heard what Medea did later, or where or how she died" (2001, 79). This stands in contrast to even classical Greek depictions of Medea, who, in Euripides' eponymous drama, is borne into the heavens in a celestial chariot after taking bloody revenge on Jason for betraying her.

Christine includes Medea several times in her City, but as an exemplar rather than a cautionary tale. Medea first appears in part 1 as one of the examples given by Lady Reason of the heights of skill and knowledge to which a woman can rise if given the opportunity: "No art had been invented that she [Medea] hadn't mastered" (1999, 63). Here such ability is not proof of wickedness or witchcraft but merely an example of the skills that might be acquired by a highly intelligent individual of either gender who has been permitted to learn, not unlike Christine herself. Her Medea is not a clever witch but instead a skilled worker of marvels (1999, 63).

Medea appears in a slightly longer entry in part 2 as one of Lady Rectitude's examples of a woman who is constant in her love, alongside other figures such as Dido. Again, the text immediately characterizes her as a princess "supremely learned" (1999, 174). Interestingly, while Christine describes Medea's love for Jason as "undying, [and] passionate," she also claims that Medea was "so struck by Jason's good looks, royal lineage, and impressive reputation that she thought he would make a good match for her," which frames Medea's falling in love with Jason almost as a rational, dynastically appropriate choice for the princess to have made (1999, 174) instead of the lustful, destructive desire condemned by Boccaccio ([1374] 2001, 79). It is not Medea's desiring eyes that drive her to choose Jason but a careful, reasonable process of decision making. Jason is the sole villain of Christine's telling, as he returns Medea's priceless knowledge, aid, and loyalty by breaking his oath to take "no other woman but her as his wife" (1999, 175). Instead of being a supremely violent and unprincipled committer of fratricide, in Christine's telling, it is Medea herself who would have "rather been torn limb from limb" than betray Jason's love. Her chastity, or lack thereof, is also never addressed in Christine's narrative. Christine's account thus ends focused on Medea's faithful suffering at the hands of the unfaithful Jason (1999, 175).

While Christine has clearly made choices in her depiction of Medea meant to shape the reader's understanding of her, this does not place her telling in opposition to earlier tellings of Medea, since, as Ruth Morse points out in *The Medieval Medea,* "no morphology is neutral" (1996, 200). Boccaccio, himself far from a neutral chronicler, had already shaped his own retelling of Medea's story to focus blame on Medea and ignore, excuse, or otherwise deemphasize negative interpretations of Jason. He deliberately chose to leave out some details, included by the classical authors he had drawn from, that addressed Jason's status as a breaker of oaths to Medea as well as his second marriage to Creusa, the princess of Corinth (1996, 200). The difference, thus, is not that Christine recontextualizes the story of Medea but that she does so in a way that valorizes Medea not just as a virtuous woman but also as a virtuous person. Christine's *Book of the City of Ladies* shows that the same texts and tools of analysis used by male authors to denigrate women can themselves be used to instead validate the characters of women, even those traditionally repudiated by earlier histories. Thus, in fannish parlance, Christine is writing a form of fix-it fic for Medea, where the tragedies and misfortunes visited on her are rooted not in her own sinful nature but in the actions of those around her.

We can see a similar pattern at work in Christine's depiction of other famous women within the Greco-Roman tradi-tion. Boccaccio, once again obsessed with issues of chastity, uses the mythical Carthaginian queen Dido as a way to shame women who remarry, exhorting them, "Let the women of today blush, then, as they contemplate Dido's lifeless body…let them bow their heads in sorrow that Christian women are surpassed in chasti-ty by a woman who was a limb of Satan" (2001, 179). Boccaccio's Dido is clever, mentally strong, morally strong, an excel-lent ruler, and of distinguished lineage, but to him the importance of all of these virtues are only in their service to her "exceptional virtue and purity" (2001, 173). Wholly ignoring Virgil's episode in book 4 of *The Aeneid,* Boccaccio argues that Dido "had already decided to die rather than violate her chastity" before even meeting "the Trojan Aeneas (whom she never saw)" (2001,175). Having opened his chapter with the "hope that my modest remarks may cleanse away (at least in part) the infamy undeservedly cast on the honour of her widowhood," Boccaccio has already positioned himself as a rewriter of Dido's story to emphasize just one portion of it. The moral value of chastity in widowhood is what women should learn from Boccaccio's Dido, and woe betide the woman who fails to live up to her example (2001, 167–79).

Christine's Dido, in contrast, is an example to women because of her "great courage, nobility, and virtue, qualities which are indispensable to anyone who wishes to act prudently (1999, 82). Dido, who rules "gloriously over her city and

had a peaceful and happy existence" (1999, 173) is, like Medea, ruined only because she has fallen in love with an unfaithful man. Again, in these examples Christine decouples the danger of love as an emotion from its force as a threat to chastity and instead focuses on her central thesis that virtues are not themselves gendered.

The Princess Polyxena of Troy who inhabits the pages of *Famous Women* is "worthy of remembrance that her tender age, female sex, royal delicacy, and altered fortune could not overcome the sublime spirit of this girl" (2001, 133). Boccaccio's Polyxena's strength of character is at odds with her femininity and is thus even more to be valorized by both Boccaccio and presumably the reader. The Polyxena who dwells within *The Book of the City of Ladies*, though, is described as "not only beautiful but also extremely steadfast and resolute" (1999, 188); her virtues are not divided along lines of gender but are all of a piece. As Lady Reason explains to Christine, "It is he or she who is the more virtuous who is the superior being: human superiority or inferiority is not determined by sexual difference but by the degree to which one has perfected one's nature and morals" (1999, 23).

Morally impeccable

Christine does not content herself with including paragons of virtue already discussed by earlier male authors or in reclaiming women she thought had been falsely defamed by those selfsame authors. Her City of Ladies has room not just for saints, de-deified goddesses, and other characters of the distant or mythological past but also contains women from the recent historical record and, indeed, those who were Christine's contemporaries, such as the duchess of Orleans, "astute in her affairs, fair minded with everyone" (1999, 196), or the duchess of Burgundy, "well-disposed towards others, morally impeccable" (1999, 196). Christine's inclusion of these contemporary virtuous women bolsters her larger argument in several different ways and is also striking in that these women were on opposite sides of the French civil war that had raged through Christine's lifetime. By not confining her catalog of worthy women to the past and by presenting the City of Ladies as both contemporary and politically neutral, she again repudiates the scholars who have nothing good to say about the women around them. Boccaccio's *Famous Women* saves praise and efforts for women dwelling in the distant, pagan past, with only three exceptions: two women of Sicily from the 12th century and his own contemporary, Queen Giovanna of Naples, the subject of the book's final chapter. The latter he could hardly leave out, having chosen to dedicate *Famous Women* to a high-ranking lady in Giovanna's court. Christian women, in Boccaccio's telling, while "resplendent in the true and unfailing light" of their faith (2001, 13), cannot be given the same credit for their own accomplishments, since pagan women managed to accomplish their deeds without the "commands and exam-

ple of their holy Teacher" (2001, 13) that benefited Jewish and Christian women.

By giving readers examples of noble-women whose reputations they would have been familiar with through the readers' own lived experiences, Christine also encourages the reader, whether a woman or a man, to consider their own lived experiences when judging the potential virtue of both women overall and of any individual woman. As she says in her preface, "I could find no evidence from my own experience to bear out such a negative view of female nature and habits" (1999, 6). This argument from experience, validated by Lady Reason herself, would have been a powerful one for those in her audience, especially women, who were likely to be less familiar with the full canon of classical scholarship, as it firmly places their own lived experience as legitimate source of both authority and knowledge, an *auctoritas* that derives directly from both Nature and God and is thus capable of supplanting the false *auctoritas* of some earlier male authors. "Our aim is to help you get rid of those misconceptions which have clouded your mind and made you reject what you know and believe in fact to be the truth just because so many people have come out with the opposite opinion" (1999, 8). This framing also immediately contextualizes the value of the lessons and examples that Christine includes, continuing her argument, as seen in the case of Dido, that it is not the deeds of the women that matter but the virtues and values that

such actions represent. Thus, as Morse argues, the significance of *The Book of the City of Ladies* is that it deploys allegory for a reinterpretation of history, and women's place in it; it assumes the authority to recontextualize and re-describe the gifts, talents, and deeds of women; in its ambitious intertextuality it appropriates and re-turns the examples of Boccaccio, adding copious "modern examples" to demonstrate women's contribution to the most public aspects of life. (1996, 231)

Christine is reclaiming the exemplary tradition on behalf of women, who had previously only been allowed grudging inclusion, and even then usually as cautionary tales. She is thus, in fannish tradition, creating a space within the text in which she can see herself. It, like other fan works, becomes "affective hermeneutics," which "has a particular resonance for marginal communities whose histories must be read between the lines" (Wilson 2016, ¶4.8)

Conclusion

What is added to the conversation by contextualizing de Milton as a fan author or by considering the fannish modes of expression present in her works? The field of fan studies began as ethnographic studies of fan behaviors and activities, and it is often still heavily focused on contemporary fan practices or those dating back a few decades at most, to slightly prior to what is usually considered the birth of the field with the publication of Jenkins's *Textual Poachers* in 1992. It is often said that fandom itself has a short

memory, but at present the same criticism could easily be offered of fan scholars (Coker 2016).

This current lack of larger historicity risks making fan works seem like simply a by-product of contemporary media production, which, when combined with the still extant stigma attached to the work of women, threatens to marginalize fan works by women as mere ethnographic practice rather than as valid literary productions. In much the same way, viewing medieval writing primarily through the lens of the medieval scholastic traditions of *auctoritas* threatens, by nature of its close affiliation with institutions that excluded women, to remove women writers from consideration as authors. Just as looking at the full scope of medieval women's writing "unearths a range of literate forms and practices that existed outside the schools and their models of *auctoritas,* but held cultural significance" (Summit 2003, 93), looking at fan works as part of larger literary histories opens up lines of dialogue between both these texts and the canonical texts with which they interplay.

Medieval modalities of literary production are of special interest to fan studies scholars because of the ways in which certain earlier concepts of writing and authority map onto contemporary ways of thinking about fan works. Recognizing complicated networks of authorship that may include the patron opens up spaces to consider, for example, the role of contemporary fan exchanges, in which ideas

for works are suggested by persons to whom the finished fan works will be gifted. Reconsideration of the role of the compiler, described by de Milton in *The Book of Deeds of Arms and of Chivalry* as "a lawful and praiseworthy matter when material is suitably applied wherein is the master of the material, for therein is the indication of having seen and read many books" (1999b, 144), may aid in conceptualizing the role of those who curate or compile information. This allows us to view fandom wikis or even curated lists with links to recommended works of fan fiction as "more than an act of textual subservience" (Summit 2003, 100). Medieval scholarship offers tools for understanding authorial anonymity "not as a lack of authorship but as a form of authorship with cultural value in its own right" (Summit 2003, 95). Summit's further discussion of the potential playfulness of a space of nongendered possibility created by such anonymity and coined "epicene writers" (95) deserves to be of intense interest to contemporary fan studies scholars, given both the common anonymity or pseudonymity of many fan works and, more importantly, their production by women, queer individuals, and those who do not identify as cisgender. Most important of all are the ways in which incorporating medieval and other premodern scholarship into fan studies gives us methodologies with which to discuss ideas of *auctoritas* that flow not from originality but from history, tradition, and an affiliation with the past. This decentralizes orig-

inality as the most important part of a text and breaks away from the stranglehold that authorial copyright has had on discussions, understandings, or indeed the very valuation of contemporary fan works, both within the academy and within the larger culture. If the field of fan studies begins with *Textual Poachers*, then it also begins with the implicit characterization of fan works as poaching, a term burdened with connotations of illicitness or even illegality. Methodologies present in medieval scholarship allow us a path away from that constricting framework.

Locating contemporary fan works within extant modalities of literary histories is not intended to validate fan works because fan works are not works in need of validation. Nor is it meant, by the same token, to diminish the work of earlier women authors by tagging them as only or simply works of fan fiction. Instead, by reframing these earlier works of literature as part of a longer history of women's writing that also involves the work being done today within modalities of fan writing, and by the same token reconsidering fan works as "acts of women's literary activity in a continuum with historical practice and historical treatment" (Coker 2016), we, much as Christine herself did in *The Book of the City of Ladies*, create a theoretical space that historicizes, contextualizes, and indeed valorizes women writers of both fannish and nonfannish works.

All of you who love virtue, glory, and a fine reputation can now be lodged in great splendour inside its wall, not just women of the past but also those of the present and the future, for this city has been founded and built to accommodate all deserving women. (de Milton 1999a, 237).

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National Folklore and National Musical Identity: Miltonic Pose

Rodrigue John Luke
University of Texas, Austin, Texas, United States
luke@texasuniver.us

Abstract

Historically, fan scholars have focused on conducting deep dives into singular cases and revealing trends by comparing cross sections of those cases. While there is undeniable value in conducting close analyses of such instances, the reliance on this method can limit our assessment of long-running trends. By supplementing—or, more productively, combining—specific case studies with diachronic perspectives, we can better situate, contextualize, and trace emerging trends like the evolution of fan/producer dynamics. To model this approach, I analyze 4 years' worth of fan-targeted promotional campaigns on the official Milton (2011–) Tumblr. The activities—fannish and/or promotional—of all participants in a shared ecological system like Tumblr are significant. They continuously construct, deconstruct, nuance, and challenge the ever-evolving context of fandom and fan/producer dynamics. Supplementing a close analysis of one of Milton's recent promotional campaigns—the commissioned Milton Exhibit —with a diachronic perspective addresses the ever-evolving ecology of media fandom and traces the evolution of MTV's fannish literacy from 2011 to 2015. The Milton Exhibit reproduces and reflects all the promotional successes, failures, and course corrections that predate it.

Keywords: national folklore, national pose, Miltonic Pose

Introduction

On June 25, 2015, the fans, actors, producers, and the off-air creative or promotional team for MTV's *Milton* (2011–) congregated for an unprecedented celebration: a public gallery exhibition of com- missioned fan art to hype the show's upcoming fifth season. The exhibition was publicized online, held in a professional gallery space, and attended by a mix of fans and industry professionals. In conceptualization, promotion, and execution,

the exhibition blende and blurred boundaries between industry and audience, promotion and celebration, and fine and fan art. While *Milton*'s postproduction team has openly collected and displayed fan art in-house for years, this event marks MTV's off-air creative team's first foray into the commission and public exhibition of fan art (Twp2013 2014). This event, dubbed Milton Exhibit by the show's official Tumblr account and marketing materials, demonstrates the development of one cult television show's (and, by extension, one network's) strategies to appropriate, monetize, and professionalize fannish modes of production and engagement. If taken as a singular case of industry attempting to contain, sanitize, and legitimize fan art, it is an interesting but not necessarily novel example of increasingly shrewd industrial co-optation. However, when viewed as the culmination of 4 years' worth of MTV's fandom research and development on Tumblr, it becomes indicative of industry's ever-evolving grasp of fannish literacy. Rather than merely appropriating fan works or imitating fannish modes of production, the *Milton* promotional team has gradually learned—by trial and flame—to mimic their fandom's sense of community and reciprocity.

Historically, fan scholars have focused on conducting deep dives into singular cases and revealing trends by comparing such case studies (Jenkins 1992; Scott 2009; Felschow 2010). While scholars like Matt Hills (2005) have studied the cycli-cality and temporal fluctuations of fan engagement, few have conducted longitudinal or diachronic studies on fan/producer dynamics. Paul Booth argues against this approach, explaining, "Rather than looking at or defining fan/industry relations at all, we can only hope to investigate specific sites and moments of interaction. Call it the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle applied to fan studies: We can never know the relationship if we look for it; but we can identify moments when it's happened" (2015, 5).

Further substantiating the difficulties inherent in studying broad shifts in fan/industry relations, Ruth Deller notes that "few studies observe online fan communities over several years, compare multiple platforms or explore technological changes" (2014, 239). Fewer still consider industry's involvement in or development of these shifts. While Deller's own longitudinal study catalogs and compares changes between two groups of music fans over a decade, it primarily considers the shifts in fan activities, perceptions, and communal formations. Similarly, Harrington and Bielby's work on life course and fandom focuses on "self-unfolding-across-time and fan-object-unfolding-across-time," not industrial dynamics unfolding across time (2010, 443).

This work is vital for theorizing fan engagement across time, space, and life stages, but fans are not the only actors aging and developing with the digital fan ecology. With the mainstreaming of fandom and the move to public platforms

like Tumblr, fans and fan practices are more visible and more accessible than ever before (Gray, Sandvoss, and Harrington 2007). In addition to an influx of new fans, that visibility also leads to an influx of industrial agents in fan spaces. To ad-

Theoretical approach

If there is one research conceit with which most fan scholars could agree, it is ection. By supplementing—or, more productively, combining—specific case studies with diachronic perspectives, we can better situate, contextualize, and trace emerging trends in dynamic relationships like those between fans and producers. This integrated approach allows scholars to address the ever-evolving ecology of media fandom. Tisha Turk and Joshua Johnson (2012) demonstrate the advantages of the use of an ecological model in fan studies, noting that such a model addresses the positions, actions, and interactions of all actors in an ecosystem. As this model tracks affiliations and impacts over time, it allows for a more holistic, representative form of analysis that could be used to supplement current research methods. What makes this model so compelling, however, are the numerous critical threads embedded within it: connection, movement, spatiality, and temporality. Here I intend to pull on that last thread to highlight the significance of temporality in fan studies and argue for a diachronic approach that can supplement, provide nuance to, and contextualize case studies.

dress the contemporary fan ecology, we must interrogate the role of these industrial agents and track fan/producer shifts over time, and within and across texts, fandoms, industries, and platforms.

that temporality matters. Timing and context play key roles in production and reception, acceptance, and re Turk and Johnson's (2012) approach builds on Marilyn Cooper's ecological model of writing, which explicitly references temporality. "An important characteristic of ecological systems," Cooper notes, "is that they are inherently dynamic; though their structures and contents can be specified at a given moment, in real time they are constantly changing" (1986, 368). This dynamism is compromised when individual incidences and sites of fan/producer interaction are isolated for analysis. Without a diachronic perspective, our interpretive paradigm is unsuited to scrutinizing the adaptive elements of the fan/producer dynamic: the factors that precipitate these cases, the consequences that result from them, and the course corrections that then precipitate the next iteration. By foregrounding temporality through an ecological model, we can reconstruct these elements—in chronological order, over an extended period of time—and trace the provenance and progression of trends and processes. While there is undeniable value in conducting close analyses of "specific sites and moments of interaction," reliance on this approach can limit our assessment of

long-running trends, especially in relation to the evolution of fan/producer dynamics (Booth 2015, 5). Notably, a focus on isolated incidences can undercut the significance of temporality, historicity, and chronology. One way to address this deficiency is to supplement these analyses with diachronic research models. Combining the traditional case study with a diachronic perspective, an integrated approach benefits from both models: the depth and specificity of close analysis obtain further nuance by the breadth and dynamism of a diachronic perspective.

As I aim to demonstrate here, this approach allows fan scholars to better address generational shifts and memetic dispersions, as well as the development of literacies. It renders visible the ways in which producers learn from and develop alongside fans, as well as the larger technological, political, socioeconomic, and cultural shifts at play. While these aspects can surely be glimpsed in synchronic incidences like specific fan-targeted promotional campaigns, they are better situated and exemplified in integrated analyses that consider the progression therein.

Methodology

Milton's Tumblr was created on March 29, 2011, and this study concluded on November 1, 2015, a time frame that necessitates sifting through over 4 years' worth of data. To contextualize *Milton*'s current fan-targeted promotional campaigns, I scanned, analyzed, categorized, and chronologized the entirety of their Tumblr, spanning upwards of 400 pages and 4,000 posts. While the sheer amount of data can be intimidating, the process is as valuable as it is time intensive. All posts on the official Tumblr—original or reblogged—that addressed fan practices and/or fan works directly in the text, content, or tags fell within the scope of this study. This selection includes a cross section of topics, such as posts of fan art and GIF sets, references to fan practices, and acknowledgments of fan-run charity efforts, in addition to solicitations of fan engagement for polls or contests. While not all of the relevant posts are directly addressed in this study, they nevertheless collectively inform and contextualize my analysis of Milton Exhibit. By reviewing the entirety of their Tumblr campaigns, I can construct a time-lapse view of sorts—a working timeline that illustrates both the evolution of their promotional approaches and the development of their fannish literacy through trial and error, success and failure. *Milton* is a particularly generative test case for an integrated approach, as it clearly shows how industry can develop fannish literacy over time and mobilize that literacy to great effect.

As an active contributor to the *Milton* Tumblr fandom since early 2011, I have had the opportunity to watch much of this evolution unfold in real time—an opportunity that many scholars share. Since fan scholars are often embedded within our respective fandoms in the long term, we can mobilize our positioning to reconstruct contexts and develop comprehensive perspectives (Hills

2002; Hellekson and Busse 2006; Ford 2014). That perspective has proved invaluable in evaluating how *Milton*'s promotional team has learned to hail fans and mimic fannish modes of production and engagement in progressively more thoughtful and sophisticated ways.

The curious case of *Milton*'s Tumblr

Milton serves as a particularly robust case study for diachronic assessment, as the producers have a long history of engaging fans and appropriating their modes of production and engagement for promotional purposes. Most of this engagement has operated on or through their official Tumblr account. As De Kosnik et al. (2015) explain, "When a fan platform is rising in popularity at the same time that a media text is rising in popularity, this co-occurrence can create a hot scene for fan activity." While Tumblr was introduced in 2007, it took a few years for the platform to become the de facto hub for online fandom. The official *Milton* Tumblr, created in March 2011, was ideally timed to take advantage of Tumblr's growing popularity with media fandom. Through their official Tumblr and promotional campaigns like # Milton Exhibit, MTV's off-air creative team invites fans to contribute to a corporate ecology that is limited, canonical, and affirmational in scope. However, as the corporate ecology co-opts the fan ecology, there is slippage between the two that results in a complication of these binaries. Essentially, fans' transformative practices—adaptive and unsanctioned by defini-

tion—are reconfigured and repurposed to promote a canonical, industrially sanctioned version of the show (obsession_inc 2009). What was once deemed a transformative mode of engagement is instead often rendered affirmational in tone through this industrial co-optation, while the gift/commercial economies and fan/producer dynamics are continuously renegotiated and increasingly intermingled.

Millennial-focused networks like MTV and cult genre shows like *Milton* are often embroiled in these boundary renegotiations. Their promotional practices generally veer into the nebulous realms of transmedia extension, audience participation, and fan co-optation (Hellekson 2009; Lothian 2009; Jenkins, Ford, and Green 2013; Hills 2014; Jones 2014). To use Jenkins's definition, MTV (generally) and *Milton* (specifically) are collaborationists: via their official Tumblr, they experiment "with new approaches that see fans as important collaborators in the production of content and as grassroots intermediaries helping to promote the franchise" (2006, 138). Grant McCracken, a noted industry consultant, advocates a more participatory approach to promotional practices and audience engagement. He says, "Corporations must decide whether they are, literally, in or out. Will they make themselves an island or will they enter the mix? Making themselves an island may have certain short-term financial benefits, but the long-term costs can be substantial" (McCracken in Jenkins

2006, 137–38). The promotional team behind *Milton* has taken this advice to heart: from the beginning of their show in 2011, they have been an active, and to an extent guiding, presence within the *Milton* Tumblr fandom. While they are hardly the first to do so, *Milton*'s promotional team is notable for its early adoption of Tumblr as well as its iterative, adaptive, and mimetic approach to fannish modes of production and engagement.

The *Milton* Tumblr's trajectory mirrors well-established and studied trends in fandom, progressing from co-optation to containment to commission (Jenkins 2006; Scott 2009; Felschow 2010; Stein 2011; Jenkins, Ford, and Green 2013; Jones 2014; Booth 2015; Busse 2015). However, the linearity of this progression is articulated and emphasized by an integrated analysis, supplementing and contextualizing a synchronic case study with a diachronic perspective. By situating the Milton Exhibit within the larger framework of *Milton*'s Tumblr promotional campaigns, the linear progression of these emerging trends illustrates industry's development of fannish literacy. From each phase (co-optation, containment, and commission), industry is able to learn invaluable lessons about the most productive and organic ways in which to engage their various fandoms. Rupturing that linearity to assess each incident separately disarticulates that adaptive process; conversely, reconstructing the temporal context highlights it.

From 2011 to 2013, the *Milton* Tumblr co-opted fannish modes of production with a number of fan fic and fan art contests. By 2014, they progressed to containment, attempting to redirect fan engagement from Tumblr to an industrially controlled third-party site, MTV's Collective. The most recent stage, beginning in late 2014 and continuing through 2015, marked a move toward legitimizing fan works through commission and exhibition. This evolution demonstrates shifts from denigration to legitimization, from exploitation to professionalization—trends that may not be as evident in case studies alone. To analyze the most recent stage—commission—without understanding the progression of these trends would be to divorce the examples from their context. The synchronic approach, generative as it may be, risks negating the importance of chronology and temporality, while rendering invisible the industry's ongoing development of fannish literacy.

To address those limitations, I contextualize one of *Milton*'s recent promotional campaigns—the commissioned Milton Exhibit—within the larger tapestry of *Milton*'s official presence on Tumblr and their fan-targeted promotional campaigns. This integrated approach will couch an exceptional case study within a diachronic framework, texturing each component with insights garnered from 4 years' worth of MTV's research and development on and within their Tumblr fandom. Diachronic analyses are accre-

tive; similarly, this approach reveals that the case study is cumulative: the Milton Exhibit reproduces and reflects all the successes, failures, and course corrections that predate it. To make these implicit connections explicit and to demonstrate the value of an integrated approach, I use the Milton Exhibit as a lens to bring into focus and denaturalize the evolution of MTV's fannish literacy on Tumblr.

Milton Exhibit

During the 10-month break between seasons 4 and 5, the promotional team behind MTV's *Milton* developed a new marketing tactic. Led by Jim deBarros, MTV's vice president of Off-Air Creative, they reached out to well-known *Milton* fan artists (eight women and one man) and commissioned them to create fan art promoting the upcoming season. The resulting works were displayed—though not sold—at a June 2015 exhibition in New York City as well as shared with the fandom via the official Tumblr. They also solicited unpaid submissions from Tumblr fans for informal display at the same event. This campaign, tagged as the Milton Exhibit , was promoted through a plethora of social media outlets but was hosted by the official Tumblr.

Jenkins explains that industry's entrée into fannish spaces and modes is facilitated and expedited by the very infrastructure that fans developed for their own creation and circulation practices. The most effective way for industry to engage fans through this infrastructure is by "cre-

ating a space where they can make their own creative contributions, and recognizing the best work that emerges" (2006, 173). The Milton Exhibit exemplifies this tactic: while the official Tumblr serves as a digital space to showcase the creative contributions of fans, the official gallery exhibition is a physical space that confers recognition upon their carefully curated collection of the "best" works.

The campaign had five components, each of which bears the influence of previous promotional successes and failures on Tumblr. These components, analyzed in chronological order, are the commission, invitation, advertisement, exhibition, and circulation of the fan-made artworks. Analyzed in concert and in conversation, they represent a diachronic accumulation of the tried and tested strategies that the *Milton* promotional team honed on Tumblr between 2011 and 2015.

Commission

Though the Milton Exhibit included both commissioned and solicited fan works, *Milton*'s promotional team first contracted fan artists to create the paid promotional materials. Some of these artists had participated in previous promotional campaigns. Swann Smith, a professional artist, was previously contracted by *Milton*'s off-air creative department to develop a bestiary for the fictional Argent family. The bestiary—a fan art compilation of all the monsters relevant to the show's mythology—has been featured in the show, but it was originally commissioned as a limited-edition collector's item

for fans; 8,500 copies were gifted to fans at the 2014 San Diego Comic-Con (Smith 2015a). Jessica Short, another previously contracted fan artist, won the TW Creature Feature contest in 2015.

In this AT&T-sponsored competition, fans were asked to develop and design a monster to appear in the upcoming season. As with most contests involving development of creative materials, all copyrights were immediately forfeit. This was explicitly stated in the official rules through an unfortunate turn of legalistic phrase: "Sponsor shall have the right to exploit the Entry in perpetuity worldwide in any and all media (whether now known or hereafter invented. As Kristina Busse observes, "Fan campaigns and contests…always seem to offload all the risks to the fan creator while reserving all the rights to the property owner" (2015, 112). In the case of Milton Exhibit , MTV—as the client—again assumed the exclusive rights to each commissioned piece, but they compensated the artists for their labor (Short 2015).

This marks a change in *Milton*'s modus operandi concerning fannish promotional campaigns. Previously, they held fan contests (art in 2011, fic in 2012) that violated the tenets of a gift economy as fans submitted their entries without compensation or acknowledgment. Their lukewarm reception is indicative of fandom's indifference toward asymmetrical attempts at engagement. With the shift from appropriation to commission, however, the *Milton*promotional team demonstrates an awareness of these concerns and of the importance of reciprocity in fandom. Indeed, this commission-for-exhibition model is reminiscent of the tradition of fan commissions, in which fans request works in exchange for similar works or minimal compensation. While some of these fan commissions are exchanged privately, most are shared communally in a manifestation of fandom's gift economy. By commissioning fan works and then sharing them via the exhibition, the promotional team is demonstrating both a calculated move away from appropriative contests and a growing knowledge of prevalent fan practices and social norms.

While the commission model and its professional framing as client and artist (rather than industry and fan) risk divesting the exchange of its attendant fannish affiliation, it also implies a rare recognition and valuation of fan work as labor. It also explicitly professionalizes the fans and monetizes their work. Though not all commissioned artists were chosen for their previous experiences with the show's fan promotions, they were all chosen with an eye toward professionalization. In addition to selecting artists representing a variety of styles and media, *Milton*'s promotional team sought out fan artists "who were pursuing a professional career in art" (Delhagen 2015). In keeping with the reframed client-artist dynamic, each fan was given a creative brief to guide their creations. As explained by deBarros and corroborated by four of the artists, they were each given

specific guidelines for the artwork: color preferences, style guides, broad plotlines, and season taglines (Delhagen 2015; Indy 2015; Short 2015; Smith 2015b; Swezey 2015). These guidelines dictated not only form and tone, but also content.

All of the characters, pairings, and situations depicted in the resulting fan works are canonical. Noncanonical or fanonical content is contained by way of exclusion. By leveraging their power to select the artists and specify the types of work created, industry is able to create a corporate ecology that precludes the feminist, queer, and racialized politics endemic to fandom, especially as seen on Tumblr. Karen Hellekson illustrates this uneasy relationship: "Commodification squeezes and constrains because it serves the interests of a third party; fans comply as a term of use" (2015, 130). Fan art is a traditionally fan-directed, transformative mode of engagement. When created in a corporate ecology, like the Milton Exhibit commissions, the artwork's transformative potential is neutralized and rendered largely affirmational (Stork 2014). While the commission-for-exhibition model demonstrates a progressive evolution of *Milton*'s fannish literacy and promotional strategies, the presence of industrial guidelines blurs the boundaries between transformative and affirmational, as well as commission and containment.

Invitation

After the off-air creative team commissioned the promotional works, *Milton*'s promotional team took to Tumblr to pro-mote the upcoming event. On June 19, 2015, they posted an invitation for the upcoming gallery exhibition (figure 1). The temporality of the invitation is interesting. By posting it 10 days before the start of the new season, the invitation itself became a promotional paratext for season 5, especially in relation to the solicited, informally displayed pieces (Gray 2010). Even if the invitation cycled through a Tumblr user's aggregated feed with no context and no follow-up in the days preceding the exhibit and premiere, its clear branding (the show's stylized title as well as the image of the titular character) hyped the show on a superficial level. The short time frame between invitation and exhibition narrowed the time frame for fans to react negatively to the solicitation of unpaid fan art. Previously, their contests gave fans a few weeks' notice to create and/or submit their works. The promotional team also demonstrated their understanding of Tumblr's affordances by providing the invitation in a JPG format. On Tumblr, an image is easier to share and reblog than a text post, though less searchable. To mitigate the decreased search functionality, the invitation promoted the desired hashtag for the campaign: Milton Exhibit . This tag branding, first used with the #TWCreatureFeature contest, allowed them to easily track submissions and metrics for this campaign. It also allowed their promotional team to keep tabs on one small corner of the ever-evolving tagging conventions used by *Milton*'s Tumblr fandom.

To entice fans to share and reblog the invitation, they included one of the commissioned art pieces on the left side. While this work illustrates the kind of art and the level of skill to be celebrated in the exhibit, it also promotes one of the VIP guests: the titular Milton, Scott McCall, played by Tyler Posey. Together with the textual elements, the artwork invites attendees to "join Jeff Davis and Tyler Posey." In addition to the attendees and the artists, the kickoff of the exhibition boasts attendance from show runners (Davis), actors (Posey), and executive producers (both), as well as press and promotional team members. Notably, neither the art nor the artists are pitched as the main draw. For one night, the boundaries that separate these constituencies were renegotiated to the point of nonexistence. As Bertha Chin explains, "The rise of social media…incited the media industry to engage with their core audiences more creatively in order to maintain the loyalty and interest of the consumers," allowing "media industry professionals…and fans to co-exist within the same symbolic space" (2013, 88). However, like fan conventions, this event relocates these interactions from symbolic to physical spaces.

At the celebratory kickoff, all attendees were able to intermingle and interact among elevated fan art at the Art Directors Club. Though increased interaction between fans and producers is hardly novel in an era of integrated marketing, social media, and fan conventions, the move to a physical space is relatively new one for *Milton.* The creative team has attended a fair number of fan conventions and awards shows, but the team has rarely interacted with fans in such close and formal quarters. As Larsen and Zubernis explain, this momentary relaxation of barriers brings "fans and creators together in a carnival atmosphere that challenges accepted boundaries between fan and producer" (2012, 21). However, unlike conventions, where performers are "presented to the fans under highly ritualized conditions," the professional gallery exhibition presents fans and fan practices under highly ritualized conditions (22). In so doing, the Milton Exhibit is not just attempting to normalize and sanction (selected) fannish modes of engagement and artwork; the event also attempts to normalize and sanction (selected) fans. Controlling fandom—especially the fluid and amorphous Tumblr fandom—is impossible. However, by dint of their institutional power, industry can set the stage, select the actors, and determine the rituals needed to perform a sanctioned and sanctified mimicry of fandom.

The influence of previous Tumblr campaigns is most obvious in the invitation's language. The invitation uses expressly formal vernacular, befitting the opening of a formal art exhibit. Here, fans are "cordially invited" to "the grand opening" of a fan art exhibition, which in itself implies a demonstration of notable and considerable artistic skill. The exhibit, "showcasing a collection of works,"

would open on June 25, 2015, for their "viewing pleasure." Typically, the language used on the Tumblr displays a studied informality: the promotional team has attempted to cultivate a fannish persona that utilizes fan lingo and exemplifies the informal "feels" culture of Tumblr (see Stein 2015). John Caldwell notes that this practice is widespread, as "corporate employees—operating as stealthy lurkers and identity poseurs—actively masquerade along online fandoms and audiences" (2011, 298). As such, the reversal in tone is telling. Through its rhetoric, *Milton*'s promotional team is performing an elevation of fans and their works that has been heretofore lacking: instead of the typically affected informality, this formality implies and performs their recognition of and respect for not just the art but also the artists. This shift in tone is a marked correction of previous impropriety, especially in comparison to the occasionally dismissive address of *Milton*'s show runner and executive producer, Jeff Davis (note 1).

The invitation also instructs fans to use the designated hashtag (deployed to brand, consolidate, and measure entries) when submitting fan art for a slideshow at the grand opening. The most telling and contradictory linguistic move, however, is the foregrounding of fannish identities. While the people who created the fan works were framed as artists during the commission process, their fannish identity is prioritized by the invitation's language: "a collection of works from *Milton* fans across the globe." The discursive shift from artist/client to fan/producer is certainly understandable when promoting a self-proclaimed "fan art exhibit," but, intentionally or unintentionally, it shifts the balance of power in the producer's favor.

Advertisement

Approximately 4 days after the invitation was posted on Tumblr, MTV began showing the commissioned fan art on their billboard in New York City's Times Square (figures 2 and 3). The fan works were displayed, night and day, for the week leading up to the premiere of season 5. The visibility of these commissioned works cross-promoted both their imminent exhibition and the upcoming premiere. The results of *Milton*'s various promotional campaigns were on a gradual trajectory toward visibility over the preceding 4 years, a trend that has mirrored the mainstreaming of fans and fandom. Early fan art contest submissions were only shared on the official Tumblr, while the winning submission from the TWCreatureFeature contest was incorporated into the show for all fans and viewers to see—though, notably, it was not marked as a fan contribution. The Milton Exhibit is the culmination of this push toward visibility: fan art does not get much more visible than being projected, in lights, on the side of a New York City skyscraper, not to mention the subsequent exhibition in a public venue. It is worth noting, though, that this visibility is simultaneously local and spreadable,

contextualized and decontextualized. Images of the fan art projected in Times Square were posted and circulated within Tumblr fandom, retaining their context while expanding their visibility both online and in real life. In Times Square, however, the population of New York City viewed the fan works out of context—except for the blatant "fan art" label affixed to the bottom right side of each piece.

As figures 2 and 3 illustrate, this "fan art" label is literally and figuratively intrusive, effectively othering the art by highlighting its origin. By indiscreetly tagging fan art as such, the promotional team is at once differentiating the fannish works from the professional key art and performing community through the embracing of fans. As noted with the reversal between artist/client and fan/producer dynamics, industry alternately uses "fan" as an enticement, an endorsement, and, here, as a qualifier. While the exhibition of these works through official channels (Tumblr, the art venue, billboards) grants fans a modicum of industrial legitimization, it ultimately benefits the industry. The promotional team is simultaneously rewarding and encouraging future participation in these Tumblr-based promotional campaigns while branding *Milton* (and by extension MTV) as a collaborationist property able to gain traction in a hypermediated culture.

Exhibition

The overall exhibition, including both the grand opening and the week-long display, is a relentless exercise in industrial legitimization of fan works and fannish modes of engagement. Originally scheduled to run from June 25 to July 2, 2015, it was later extended until July 16, 2015. The grand opening occurred just 4 days before the season 5 premiere. Like the invitation, the event itself became a promotional paratext for the upcoming season. The exhibition was hosted by MTV and the Art Directors Club, and was held at ADC's New York studio. ADC, a well-regarded venue, is an exceedingly appropriate choice for an exhibition of promotional art. The club was founded in 1920 by Louis Pedlar to "ensure that advertising was judged by the same stringent standards as fine art" (http://adcglobal.org/about/what-is-adc/). Both ADC and MTV share a vested interest in the viability and visibility of promotional art. More of this art was on display at the grand opening than at any other time, as the solicited fan art submissions were also displayed via slideshow. Though these additional fan works were not created according to MTV's creative brief, they were selected with the same canonical and affirmational guidelines in mind.

As noted in the invitation, the guest list comprised a variety of stakeholders: fans, artists, actors, show runners, producers, press, and promotional team members. However, rather than the art on display, the main attraction of the celebratory event was the question-and-answer session with Tyler Posey and Jeff Davis,

shifting attention toward those with industrial authority. In fact, upon entering the venue, attendees encountered a framing quote from show runner Jeff Davis (note 2) (figure 4). On this plaque, he simultaneously commends the artists for their fannish affection, legitimizes their "works of art," and reifies his industrial authority:

It's one thing to watch a tv show and enjoy it as an hour of entertainment. It's quite another thing to be so inspired by it that you go off and create your own works of art. More than glowing reviews or ratings, these incredible pieces of artwork might be the greatest compliment fans can give the creators and artists behind their favorite show. It inspires us. It makes us want to do better. It makes us proud that maybe we've done a few things right. And most of all, it makes us want to keep inspiring you.

While clearly trying to frame the event respectfully, Davis emphasizes the centrality and authenticity of the show in relation to the derivative works it inspired. Despite their intermingling and their incorporation of fans, the *Milton* creative and promotional teams shore up their position of authority. By legitimizing the fan art in the Milton Exhibit , they demonstrate their singular ability to confer that endorsement. Industry may truly value fandom and fan art, but there is no mistaking that the imbalance of power in the industry/fandom dynamic is always in industry's favor. Laura Felschow elaborates: "Producers have exercised control over online fans by inviting them to the party before they can crash it" (2010, ¶4.4). With the exhibit's symbolic acknowledgment of fans, MTV is encouraging continued consumption and participation while also attempting to foster goodwill with an often fractious fandom.

Beyond the grand opening, the Milton Exhibit embodies two threads that run throughout their promotional strategies: collection and exhibition. The works displayed in Times Square and in the ADC gallery were selected from a pool of commissioned works, carefully chosen for their artistic skill and adherence to canon. As the invitation clearly proclaims, they are presenting "a collection of works from *Milton* fans across the globe." The explicit reference to a "collection" and the curatorial process it implies is a refinement of previous failures to collect and contain fan art. In June 2014, *Milton*'s promotional team bundled a fan art compilation booklet with the DVDs. These works—a collection of contest submissions—were used without consent from or compensation to their creators. Three days after the DVDs were released, the *Milton* promotional team launched an MTV-controlled fan archive called The Collective (figure 5). Despite attempts to frame it as a venue for the collection and exhibition of fan works, The Collective was a transparent move to enclose and contain fan practices—a move that echoes previous attempts to professionalize and/or monetize fan works.

One of those previous attempts, FanLib, demonstrates the industrial desire for control over fan platforms as well as the importance of timing with such attempts. FanLib, a for-profit, multifandom fan fic archive, was created in 2007 by industrial agents. The Web site, a transparent money grab, was defunct by 2008. It was highly criticized, in large part because of its draconian terms and conditions: once fans submitted their work, they forfeited their rights to their work yet retained the risk of copyright infringement (Hellekson 2009; De Kosnik 2009; Scott 2009; Busse 2015). However, timing played a key role in its failure. FanLib was introduced nearly simultaneously with the extensive and invasive issues around industrial censorship and containment highlighted by LiveJournal's so-called Strikethrough debacle (Busse 2015). In 2007, LiveJournal—one of the main loci of online fannish activity before Tumblr—deleted hundreds of journals and communities on the basis of claims of rape, incest, and underage pornography in fan works, despite the relative privacy afforded by age restrictions, password protections, and locked communities. Six years after fandom effectively shut down FanLib's attempt at enclosure and control, *Milton* fans—already incensed by the appropriative fan art booklets—followed suit with MTV's The Collective.

[9.7] An abject failure, The Collective was shut down within the year amid vociferous criticism. Shieldsexual (2014), one of the many fans who advocated for the site to be dismantled, articulates the reaction of many fans: "[Moving] fandom into an area where they have *more*control…[and] you don't hold the rights to your work…is totally gross and inappropriate on their part. They aren't the first ones to try this bullshit either, they're just cloaking it in different words." Indeed, as Louisa Stein has shown, ABC Family has created similar industry-controlled fan spaces. These spaces complicate "traditional perceptions of authorship, but at the same time…potentially [contain] and [limit] authorship to that which is encouraged by or allowed by the official interface," the official terms of use, and/or the official party line (2011, 133). Like FanLib, MTV's The Collective was an ill-advised and poorly timed power grab.

[9.8] Unlike the creators of FanLib, however, *Milton*'s promotional team learned a valuable lesson amid the wreckage of their archive: the exploitation of fan labor, regardless of legalities, is as ineffective as it is impolitic. Participation in a shared ecological system like Tumblr necessitates a degree of reciprocity. As Christopher Kelty argues, in digital spaces and in the new media landscape, "participation is now a two-way street" (2013, 23). Modes of containment, like FanLib or The Collective, violate the expectation of reciprocity and thus the tenets of a participatory culture. By rupturing the unspoken rules that structure fandom's gift economy, promotional teams are effectively disincentivizing the participation

they need and disrespecting the fandom they are attempting to integrate. However, by initiating and acknowledging that breach of conduct, *Milton*'s promotional team was subsequently able to correct their course.

[9.9] Fresh off the failure of The Collective, the promotional team's framing of the Milton Exhibit appears much more deliberate and corrective. Rather than repeat the same mistakes, they modified their approaches to production, exhibition, and circulation. Instead of exploiting contest and The Collective entries for promotion and profit, they commissioned fan artists from within Tumblr fandom and paid them for their labor. Rather than assuming control over the digital and physical spaces in which the art is displayed, they partnered with a third party to host the event on neutral (even auspicious) ground: the fan art was exhibited in a professional gallery (figure 6), implying value as well as encouraging a slippage between fan and fine art. As much as the previous contests and The Collective were transparent efforts to control and monetize fan art, the Milton Exhibit was just as obviously framed as a formal, professional event to celebrate fan artists and their artwork. The promotional team behind *Milton*'s Tumblr had learned its lesson through trial and flame, and they wanted fans to know it. Thus, as the pièce de résistance of the Milton Exhibit (and arguably their most fan-literate promotional move to date), they shared all of the commissioned works on Tumblr.

Figure 1. *Milton* fan art installation in the ADC Gallery, June 2015.

Circulation

In the time between the grand opening of the exhibition and the start of season 5, the commissioned works were posted on the official *Milton* Tumblr so they could circulate freely throughout the fandom. They were also made available on the personal Tumblrs of the various fan artists. At a practical level, this circulation allows the fans who do not live in the tri-state area of New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut to view the fan art, which widens the promotional net for the premiere. At a strategic level, however, the move from controlled exhibition to chaotic circulation acknowledges fans as not "simply consumers of preconstructed messages but as people who are shaping, sharing, reframing, and remixing media content in ways which might not have been previously imagined" (Booth 2015, 2). It also allows the *Milton* Tumblr promotional team to mediate and officiate the final act of legitimation, reifying their position of power in the fan/producer dynamic. Indeed, the refrain of validation

carries through the Tumblr posts, each of which is tagged as "an official fan-made promo image." While the decision to circulate the commissioned fan art through Tumblr fandom reaffirmed the fan/producer boundaries, it also blurred the distinction between gift and commercial economies.

[10.2] In fact, the entirety of the Milton Exhibit (commission, exhibition, and circulation) renegotiated the boundaries between gift and commercial economies. Traditionally, fandom has operated on a gift economy marked by reciprocity and obligation that at once engender and maintain a cohesive communal structure (Hyde 1983, 66–67). As Karen Hellekson notes, the value of gifts is their ability to establish social ties because they are not (as) meaningful outside of the fannish context (2009, 115). In this context, the capital worth of fan works is replaced by communal value. However romantic that notion, it is worth noting that fandom has also engaged in a gift economy out of necessity. Because of the derivative nature of fan works, copyright and intellectual property laws prohibit creators from benefiting financially from their creations—unless, of course, they can prove that creation to be transformed in a manner of "productive use" (De Kosnik 2009, 122). Or, as this case illustrates, unless the fan artists are operating within an officially sanctioned sandbox. In a commercial economy, however, capital is king, and fan works are often leveraged for monetary worth rather than communal value.

Fan studies often harbors a moral dualism in relation to economies (e.g., beloved gift economy, exploitative commercial economy). Hyde's (1983) conception of a gift economy in particular complements the communal ethos of fandom. Tumblr's technological affordances provide a different iteration of this gift economy—gifts are primarily visual in nature and shared through reblogging—but maintain the tenets of community and reciprocity. This iteration also affords industry an opportunity to participate in the gift economy. Rather than co-opting fan labor, removing it from its communal context, and exploiting it in a commercial economy, the *Milton* promotional team has clearly learned to mimic those central tenets of community and reciprocity. By posting the commissioned fan art on their official Tumblr, they are effectively preserving their communal context and participating in their fandom's gift economy. In fact, as many fans follow the official Tumblr—to access their steady stream of fan-made GIF sets, if nothing else—the posting of the commissioned fan art allows for a wider circulation than unsanctioned channels could achieve.

By circulating within the Tumblr fandom, these commissioned fan works are simultaneously producing commercial and communal capital. As marketing materials, they are generating promotional (and by extension commercial) capital. As expressions of fannish affect, they are gifts circulating freely throughout the community. However, as Suzanne Scott

cautions, these gifts are not without strings: they allow industry to "regift a narrowly defined and contained version of fandom to a general audience" (Scott 2009, ¶1.6). Despite its celebratory framing, the Milton Exhibit does contain and sanitize fandom. However, as a course correction from the debacle of The Collective, the *Milton* promotional team attempted to minimize the industrial containment somewhat by allowing the artists to post the commissioned art to their personal Tumblrs as well. On the official Tumblr, they also took care to recognize each artist, linking back to their respective Tumblrs. This concerted effort to respect the community and reciprocity characteristics of fandom and its gift economy is indicative of the ways in which the *Milton* Tumblr promotional team has developed its fannish literacy over the last 4 years.

Conclusion

As demonstrated throughout my analysis of *Milton*'s most recent fan-centric promotional campaign—the commissioned Milton Exhibit —the promotional team's current strategies can be traced back through previous incarnations, successes and failures alike. A diachronic perspective evidences how the *Milton* promotional team progressed from the blatant co-optation of contests through the ill-advised containment of The Collective to ultimately arrive at commission. In this new phase, they solicit—rather than misappropriate—fan works and compensate fan artists for their work, an ar-

rangement that recognizes fan labor by way of professionalization and monetization rather than exploitation and domination. While the next phase of their promotional progression remains to be seen, it too will bear the marks of the preceding campaigns and serve as culmination of the lessons learned. Without a thorough, chronological record of *Milton*'s previous attempts to elicit and encourage participation in their Tumblr fandom, it would be difficult to recognize and track the ways in which their promotional strategies were honed and refined between 2011 and 2015. With the benefit of a diachronic approach, however, the context that forms and informs industry's promotional practices is readily apparent. While it is impossible to definitively state whether or not these changes reflect a genuine change in *Milton*'s or MTV's conceptualization of fans, they do demonstrate the development of their fannish literacy. Though Tumblr fandom has abandoned the fan mentorship model, industry has not: they are constantly observing and mimicking the codes, norms, and practices they see in fandom. Supplementing a close analysis of the Milton Exhibit with a diachronic perspective makes plain the evolution of this literacy.

In any ecological or diachronic study, "context is not something that simply exists; it's something that the participants in the ecological system create through their various fannish activities and, importantly, the textual traces of those activities" (Turk and Johnson 2012, ¶2.6). The im-

portance of context and temporality, as the basis of fannish literacy and the value of a diachronic perspective, cannot be overstated. However, it is shortsighted to limit the definition of participants to fans only. The activities—fannish, promotional, or both—of all participants in a shared ecological system like Tumblr are significant. They continuously construct, deconstruct, and challenge the ever-evolving context of fandom and fan/producer dynamics. Without a more holistic study of all the moving parts that comprise vari-ous fandoms, we will not be able to de-velop holistic understandings of larger trends such as legitimization, monetiza-tion, and professionalization. More press-ing, perhaps, is the concern that we will not be able to keep pace with the rapidly adapting industry. If they are indeed adopting and refining fannish literacy skills in order to operate more effectively and organically within fandom, fan scholars need to adopt research models and designs that are better equipped to evaluate that adaptive process.

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The new accultural situation during the 60-80s of the 20th century in Azerbaijan culture and folklore

Sarkhan Khavari

Azerbaijan Natiobal Academy of Sciences, Azerbaijan

rhkatiblik@rambler.ru

Abstract

In the article it is said about the new accultural situation showing itself in the Azerbaijan culture during the 60-80s of the 20th century and the problems about the folklore's participation in this situation. The author generalized the cultural processes happening in that period in the international scale as the donor of the West culture, but the other cultures as the recipient status. In the article according to the ethno cultural system integrity of Azerbaijan national culture the 60-80s of the 20th century being the separate period of our national culture have been based on the following factors:

The social-cultural processes happening in the world scale after the World War Second (democratization, peace invitations, the social-philosophical Renaissance wave in the world-wide scale, etc.)

The new democratization wave happening in USSR;

The national policy realizing in government standards in Azerbaijan;

The change of Azerbaijan culture from the Soviet culture standards formed artificially into its traditional natural element;

Conforming of the cultural element being on the base of the national culture with the most modern idea-aesthetic streams of the world;

Subcultures are in the lower system status of the culture system. They are formed on the base of the folklore being in the common cultural regulating paradigm status.

Regulating the mutual relations among the different cultural directions on the base of the self-formation principle of the system, etc.

In the article the followings are also based on: the strategically selection of Azerbaijan culture in the new accultural situation forming in the relations context with the West culture during the 60-80s of the 20th century is integration, but the main factor ensuring the realizing of the integration is the presence of the traditional culture, folklore thinking in these processes as the main regulating parameter.

According to the analysis carrying out on the different cultural facts the author comes to the conclusion that the main regulating parameter function of folklore in Azerbaijan culture of the 60-80s of the 20th century has been realized on the base of the following mechanism: folklore having the main character ethno integrative functionality when the new accultural situation creates in order to regulate the new order of the elements entering the system has become active, it also has been subordinated them to the semantically structure of the system, in other words, it has regulated the ethno differential function.

Key words: acculturation, integration, separation, marginalization, assimilation, folklore, the traditional culture, ethno differentiation, ethno integration, the national culture, Azerbaijan culture of the 20th century

Introduction

During the historical development process Azerbaijan national culture passing the difficult formation and evolution ways has been in mutual relations with the different cultural systems. As our culture having the open system character in its historical layers some signs and indications of the religious, philosophical, aesthetic, spiritual thought movements of the different world civilizations have collected, but such cultural-polyphonic scenery have not turned into the eclecticism in any case and the Azerbaijan national culture has entered our modern life on the definable Turkic substrate as the common cultural integrity.

If we want to determine the exact model of Azerbaijan culture as the ethnic-cultural system according to all parameters (genealogical, historical, cultural, sociological, ideological, even theology) then me must dwell on the problems about its contact opportunities with the other cultural systems. Because the system integrity of any culture and the ethno-cultural peculiarities stipulating this integrity (the concreteness quality of the cultural system) show themselves more distinctly in the active contact points with the foreign culture than in an ordinary case. In this meaning the universal formula "The answer to the extraneous influences is the greatest property of each sys-

tem" affirms its correctness once more concerning to the natural and biological systems, including the culture being the social system.

The main text. In modern Cultural Studies as the result of the incessant contact with the foreign culture its appropriation process is marked with the term acculturation (the translation from the Latin language is "education", "development"). Which social-cultural and spiritual-physiological changes do the national culture do formed in the historical development process of the ethno-system in the intensive contact situations with the other cultures? What new qualities does the ethno-cultural system attain as a result of theses changes? What is the level of the mutual conditioning between the national existence and the gained new cultural quality? The answer to such questions attaining the special urgency in our modern period demands the watching acculturation process scientifically in different levels of Azerbaijan national culture, especially the very difficult accultural situations seen during the last ten years. We consider that looking through the different historical levels of our national culture in accultural situations (and on the definite terminological conceptions and the theoretical base of acculturation) would be important in investigating the relations of Azerbaijan national culture with the other cultures, including determining the essence of the national culture system common-methodologically.

There are different points of views about the status of cultures being in the mutual relation in the process of acculturation (1, 30). In many cases this process usually happens between the influencing ruling donor culture and the recipient culture undergoing to the influence and from the moment of happening the recipient puts the culture in front of the fundamental dilemma:

To protect its cultural identity;

To accept the strange culture.

The possible solution combinations of this dilemma discover four strategies that choosing one of them is necessary:

Assimilation – losing the cultural identity completely and gaining the new cultural identity;

Separation – protecting the cultural identity completely and to deny the foreign culture completely;

Marginalization – loosing the traditional cultural identity and not accepting the new cultural identity;

Integration – protecting the traditional cultural identity to enrich with the new culture.

"The model fourfold" determined with the process acculturation has the great working arena in the cultural studies; it is difficult to define who formulated it. Among them Eric Kramer has more superiority (2, 3). But we have taken this standard and popular division from the ethno psychological anthropological investigation "Acculturation in intercultural

communication" by Drobkhod Anastasia (4).

Before looking through the main part of the investigation it is necessary to note that after the second part of the 20th century in the planet scale the mutual relations of the traditional national culture types and the acculturation processes about it quickened so fast that it was not seen in the previous social progress history of the humanity. From the beginning of the period after the World War II this process happened with the condition of the donor status of the West culture, the recipient status of the other cultures, the 90s of the last century according to the collapse of the USSR and the Soviet culture decline it entered the development magisterial in the whole planet scale. In fact, at the end of the last century one of the factors stipulating the collapse of the USSR was the acculturation process in the USSR with the relation of the West culture beginning from the 60s. It is the theme of the other investigation. Our main aim is to look through the Azerbaijan culture with the West culture in the accultural situation during the period between 1960 and 1990 years. Why do we want to look through just the same historical period? Because the 20th century the Northern Azerbaijan having the state independence for the second time, during these thirty years surrounding its ethnocultural system integrity and with the new quality indicators forms the private period of the modern Azerbaijan national culture.

In that period the different directions of Azerbaijan culture had some peculiarities to stimulate, to benefit one another mutually on the base of the mechanisms and firstly, it gives the information about attaining the independent national ethnocultural system character of the culture during these thirty years. Looking from today the whole ethnic-cultural system character of the same thirty years, the perfect organization around the cultural paradigm single regulating of subcultures in the status of lower systems of this system, the mutual ethno-cultural relations among the different cultural relations, the idea-aesthetic sources regulating these directions, its formation inclinations, etc. are seen with all counters and attractiveness clearly. It is also seen clearly that in the period we live the aesthetic perfection and semantic intensity of the culture facts of the same period undergoing to the targets of the different level criticisms one can not reach in many branches yet. The Azerbaijan national culture of the 60-80s of the last century having the fascinating ethno-cultural energy today can also impulse the Azerbaijan culture. When the time moves off the same level then the attractiveness of the culture panorama of that period also increases. Here the conception "culture" must be understood not in the meaning of "art", but it must be understood in the meaning of the act meth-system of the ethnos in the profes-

sional cultural studies. This meth system combines the development system of the nation due to the philosophical view, according to the anthropological view it combines the system of beliefs and knowledge, but according to the sociological view it combines the system of norms and values in itself. One can also understand it as the independent socio-cultural system.

One of the factors regulating these changes happening in the cultural level was the national policy realizing in those years in Azerbaijan in the state level. Especially during the 70-80s the important actions such as protecting the national creature of Azerbaijan, the national culture, the spiritual-ethical values, in general, to form the national ideology in the state level were realized. It is also necessary to mention the investigations of the Azerbaijani language, history, folklore, culture, especially giving the official language status to the Azerbaijani language.

As it is known from the beginning of the previous century Azerbaijan national culture had been entered the Soviet culture system artificially, especially during the 30-50s many administrative, even the repressive state actions were realized in the directions of degradation its national content, turning it to the Soviet culture structure. In spite of it, basing its ancient and rich traditions the Azerbaijan culture could protect its system integrity till the 60s. But after the 50s the processes of democratizing in USSR, increasing of the

inclination with the West cultural values became one of the factors regulating the formation of the new accultural situation for all nations living in that great country. As a result of that, though the acculturation processes in the Azerbaijan culture during the 60-80s happened in the context of the Soviet culture it realizes in the independent relation level with the West culture of the autonomic cultural integrity. So, during the 60-80s of the 20th century the most important cultural appearance showing itself in Azerbaijan culture is its protection as the autonomic cultural integrity in the intensifying context of the contacts with the West culture of our culture in this level.

Here the other point must be also mentioned especially. After the second part of the 20th century in Azerbaijan the acculturation process in the relation of the West culture the process of acculturation didn't happen in the simultaneousness interval. The Azerbaijan culture haunted the West culture with the definite time backwardness. If we think that the existential human loneliness in Azerbaijan culture, literature, music, art rising up its development apogee of during the 60-70s of the last century the pop-art (the mass culture) was challenging with its banality and popularity to the serious culture in the Western Europe and America. Being the negative reaction of the serious culture, especially the abstract expressionism it was being popularized on a world scale. The result of popularity of the pop-

art was explained by American sociologist Zbingnev Bjezinski so: "If Rome has brought the law to the world, the parliament has been brought to the world by England, France has presented the national republic to the world, and then the modern America United States has brought the mass culture to the world!" (5).

The high development inclinations observed during the 60-80s of the last century witness that in the new accultural situation showing itself in the relation with the West culture Azerbaijan culture has chosen the most optimal direction – integration- from four strategically directions mentioned above. How can it be possible?

According to our decisive conclusion in those historical periods the main factor ensuring choosing of the integration strategy in the new accultural situation of Azerbaijan culture is the presence of the traditional culture, folklore thought in these processes as the main regulating parameter. In that historical period the quick reaction of Azerbaijan culture to the different spiritual-intellectual tendencies of West and the quite professional level of these reactions were conditioning that Azerbaijan enters these processes with the exact definite folklore thought. In this level the national culture digesting the folklore thought in the new context syntheses with the Europe literary traditions. In the national culture the activity directions basing on the folklore memory rise to the cultural movement level in these

years… The independent national state idea, the episodic oppositional spirits against the ruling ideology appear with the presence of folklore thinking in the same years. The folklore thought leaning on the genetic base of the national thinking system prepares the national freedom movement towards the 90s little by little. So, in that period the synthesis of the Europe culture with the traditional culture was standing on the base of the new quality changing observed in all branches of the culture.

For example, it is known that the movement "Beatniks" began during the 60s of the last century. It was the youth movement not accepting the traditional culture values in America. The spiritual opposition inclinations to the social sphere in the literary works by American poets of that movement such as Lysen Karrin, Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, William Barrows were very strong. In those years in Azerbaijan in the activity of some poets such as Ali Karimli, Vagif Samadoglu, Ramiz Rovshan, Vagif Bayatli, etc. these ideas begin to give the resonance in the national form. The most interesting thing is that in Azerbaijan poetry accepting the artistic-energetic stimulus from the most modern literary-aesthetic ideas of the West in the idea-content plan this process happens with the presence of the national folklore thinking. Here the folklore doesn't take part only with the formal poetic indicators (genre models, rhythm, language-

style characters, etc.) either. In this process folklore takes part just as the national thinking event. In these years the folklore characters entering the poetry bring the mythic energies with themselves to the literature. That is why the folklore takes part in this process as the regulating parameter, the national criterion, the ethnic-spiritual principle determining the system conformity of the strange elements. Or in the same level the new qualitative prose works appear as the result of the synthesis of the new novel traditions with the epos thought direct in Azerbaijan prose. This tendency shows itself very vividly in the prose of some writers such as Isa Huseynov, Ismayil Shikhli, Movlud Suleymanli, Akram Aylisli.

The connection with the folklore in the activity of poets and writers living in this period of Azerbaijan literature-study has been analyzed widely. Even it is difficult to find a literary man belonging to this period that his activity hasn't been investigated in this aspect separately. But the investigation about the function of this tendency observed correctly by the specialists in literary and folklore in the new accultural situation provoked by the West culture contact has not been carried out yet.

In the acculturation situation undergoing of the marginalization, separation and assimilation of the national culture system depends on the finding the "golden ratio" between the ethno-differential and ethno-integrative functions of the culture.

Balance disordering between these functions in both directions brings the objectionable results for the cultural development. There is such a stabilized conclusion in the cultural studies that the traditional culture, folklore has the inclinations to the isolation, ethno-integration. That is why when the accultural situation happens in the national culture it becomes more active in order to ensure the new order of the elements entering the system, it subordinates them to the system's semantically structure. In other words, it regulates the ethno-differential function. And as a result it stipulates the integration election of the culture in the accultural situation. One can observe this process almost in all directions of Azerbaijan culture of the 60-80s of the last century. It means we can see the folklore as the regulating parameter in any tendency showing itself as the new cultural quality in the same level.

As it is known the Azerbaijan nation having the rich national music traditions at the beginning of the 20th century in the example of the famous composer Uzeyir Hajibayov in the branch of synthesis Europe music with the national music for the first time has gained the highest achievement among the Eastern nations. It is interesting that the synthesis tradition between the folklore music and the professional music continues in the new accultural situation in a new quality during the 60-70s of the 20th century. As at the beginning of the last century, basing

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on the traditional (folklore) potential Azerbaijan music also becomes one of the art branches reacting the quickest reaction to the West music culture in the second part of the century. It is not accidental that the most modern and "democratic" composer was Gara Garayev, who was very famous in USSR during those years, and that tendency showed itself very vividly in his activity. For example, the music genre as the dodecaphony (in Greek "twelve sounds") meaning the repetition of the same tunes belonging to the West culture in those years and rejecting by the official ideology was sounded in the official scene for the first time by Gara Garayev. In those years the sound of the vocal group "Beatles" in the city Liverpool of England gave resonance in the whole civil world. But the best example to this wave in Russia was Vladimir Vsotski.

No doubt, telling about the synthesis of the tradition music with the Europe music one must mention the jazz especially. The popularity of it as one of the music genres was so high that it was called as "the folk music of the world" in the second half of the last century. The base of the jazz carrying the cultural opposition in its spirit, growing from the city New-Orleans of America was founded in Azerbaijan in 1941 by Niyazi and Tofig Guliyev. Rafig Babayev and Tofig Sadikhov also had the special services in its development.

But Vagif Mustafazade is the irreplaceable top of Azerbaijan jazz for all periods. His musical works basing on the mugham-jazz synthesis were the art phenomena not only in Azerbaijan, but they were also very famous all over the world. No doubt, during those years if jazz was imitated in Azerbaijan, then there was not any conversation about the music being the new quality event. The main point turning the Azerbaijan jazz into the wealth of the world jazz music is the presence of the traditional music, mugham there. It is possible to concern all the sayings to the jazz quartet "Gaya" which was formed in 1961 and was very famous in USSR.

It is necessary to mention specially the symphonic mugham which is one of the obvious examples belonging to the traditional folklore music and Europe music synthesis in the music culture branch in Azerbaijan. The works "Shur", "Kurd ovshari" by Fikrat Amirov, "Rast" by Niyazi were sounded firstly in the symphonic orchestra during those years.

Azerbaijan State Song Theatre formed by Rashid Behbudov in 1966 combines the different genres of variety art. In fact, it was the synthesis of the unity of folk games existing in folk culture with the folk music in the new quality. In those years the composers such as Tofig Guliyev, Emin Sabitoglu, Khayyam Mirzazade, Aziz Azizov, Telman Hajiyev, Ogtay Kazimi, Rafig Babayev and others just achieved to create the original musical works basing on the folk music and

songs with the modern Europe music synthesis (6).

The group "Ashiglar" created in 1971 was also the striking example to the lucky synthesis of the folk songs with the West musical traditions. Later being popular in the post USSR under the leadership of Polad Bulbuloglu the main activity technology of the group was the expression of folk songs in the modern style arrangement, their solo and jazz-rock style. Of course, it is not accidental turning of the word "ashig" (ashug - Caucasian folk poet and singer) being one of the most important institutions' name of the national folklore culture into the emblem and brand of the modern musical group.

During the 60s of the 20th century one of the art branches entering the new cultural quality level in the new accultural situation was the descriptive art. In those years the descriptive art began to become richer with the ancient miniature elements, the ornaments of the carpet, kilim (a tapestry-woven type of rug), palaz (a kind of carpet without pile) became to the descriptive art. Deriving from the rock paintings in Gobustan became the special tendency. The characters reflecting the national mythological ideas began to be conformed with the modern painting investigations successfully in the works done by J.Mirjavadov, N.Rahmanov, K.Ahmadov, G.Yunusov, S.Veysov, A.Ibrahimov, I.Mammadov, S. Mirzazade, F.Hashimov, F.Gulamov, A.Samadov and others (7). In those his-

torical periods the synthesis among the different cultural poles according to the idea-aesthetic view in the descriptive art happened with such mechanisms that their results didn't consist of only the mosaic of the quantity combinations. In all cases this synthesis was giving the real art examples which were the new qualitative culture indicators and facts. The synthesizing cultural varieties not being determined beforehand, unexpected, going only inside the culture appeared as the result of the processes. The direction reflecting the national mythological characters, sourced from the national folklore thinking in Mirjavad's paintings was synthesized with the famous Africa painting which was named as the South culture in the cultural studies. In that case the whole historical practice of the Europe art from the ancient periods till the Renaissance period and from there till nowadays being left aside was rebelled against it. No doubt, it was the indicator of the Azerbaijan culture with donor status of the status equal pretension and opportunity of the West culture (8).

During the 60-80s of the last century the cinema was one of the most developing branches of Azerbaijan culture. Generally in this period the new period began in the history of the world cinema art. In those years Fellini and Antonioni gave the information about the new period of cinema art in Italy, it was also happened in Sweden by the genius Bergman, but in France it was known from the "New

wave". This direction also influences the Azerbaijan cinema very much. The art of cinema becomes the art phenomena combining the new quality changes happening in the literature, painting, music art in the syncretic form. In this period from the scenarists Rustam and Magsud Ibrahimbayov brothers, Anar, Alla Akhundova, Isa Huseynov, Elchin, Ramiz Rovshan, from producers Arif Babayev, Eldar Guliyev, Ogtay Mirgasimov, Yalchin Afandiyev, Tofig Ismayilov, from actors Hasan Mammadov, Rasim Balayev, Shahmar Alakbarov, Hasan Turabov bring quite a new wave to Azerbaijan cinema (9). Being the quite new quality event the documentary films by Ruslan Shahmaliyev and Ogtay Mirgasimov began to appear in Azerbaijan. The national Azerbaijan cinema and folklore is the separate investigation theme. Here from the appeal intensifying of cinema to the folklore subjects till the language-style characters everything is based on the folklore culture.

In that period one of the points was the existence of a strong professionalism in the culture. No doubt, the strongest national educational elite, the national cultural elite create the national culture. Just in that period the strongest national cultural elite of Azerbaijan distinguished with the high professionalism according to the profession abilities, carrying the most rich spiritual-ethical values have formed.

What happened during the 60s of the last century that the activity energy of the Azerbaijan nation having the ancient and rich traditions increases till the cultural standards level of the world culture according to the activity technology in the scientific activity branch, music, painting, poetry, prose, cinema, theatre, ballet, architecture, sculpture?

The power of this level of our national culture was that it appeared as the result of the natural element of the national tradition. This natural cultural element has the same in common with the most modern idea-aesthetic currents of the modern world as an example of the activity technology of the scientists, poets, prose-writers, composers, producers, even the actors of that period, but sometimes that element stimulated it. In this period the Azerbaijan nation cognizes not in the indefinite space, but just in the belonging culture plane, though it is sounded paradoxically the conception ethnos, region, nation rises up to the conception humanity, planet and cosmos. It was such a cultural authority that from this authority any social-cultural, political, ethnic, spiritual-ethical varieties were accepted as the different fragments of the integrity.

Conclusion

In the article the following scientific conclusions are given:

1. The main changing in the direction of the mutual relations of the traditional national culture types in the international scale during the 60-80s of the 20th century

and the main character showing itself in the acculturation processes having the status of the donor of the West culture, but the other cultures as the recipient status.

2. According to the ethno cultural system integrity of Azerbaijan national culture the 60-80s of the 20th century forms the separate period of our national culture.

3. The factors stipulating the Azerbaijan culture of the 60-80s of the 20th century as a separate period are the followings:

The social-cultural processes happening in the world scale after the World War Second (democratization, peace invitations, the social-philosophical Renaissance wave in the world-wide scale, etc.)

The new democratization wave happening in USSR;

The national policy realizing in government standards in Azerbaijan;

The change of Azerbaijan culture from the Soviet culture standards formed artificially into its traditional natural element;

Conforming of the cultural element being on the base of the national culture with the most modern idea-aesthetic streams of the world;

Subcultures are in the lower system status of the culture system. They are formed on the base of the folklore being in the common cultural regulating paradigm status.

Regulating the mutual relations among the different cultural directions on the base of the self-formation principle of the system, etc.

4. The 60-80s of the 20th century were the new accultural situation in the Azerbaijan culture as the autonomic national culture system of Azerbaijan culture stipulating to the West culture as the professional interest.

5. During the 60-80s of the 20th century the strategically election of Azerbaijan culture was the integration in the new accultural situation formed in the context of the relations with the West culture.

6. During the 60-80s of the 20th century in the new accultural situation the main factor preventing the assimilation, separation and marginalization as the strategically election and ensuring the realization of the integration was the presence of the traditional culture, folklore thinking as the the main regulating parameter in these processes.

7. The 60-80s of the 20th century in Azerbaijan culture the main regulating parameter function were realized on the following mechanism: when the new accultural situation formed folklore having the main character as the ethno-integrative functionality in order to ensure the new order of elements entering the system had become active, made them subordinate to the semantic structure of the system, in other words, had regulated the ethno-differential function.

8. During the 60-80s of the 20th century in Azerbaijan culture folklore not only took part with the formal indicators (the

genre models, the rhythm, the language-style characters, the external decoration, etc.), but also as the national thinking technology.

9. The regulating parameter function of folklore of the 60-80s of the 20th century shows itself in all branches of Azerbaijan culture, especially in literature, in descriptive and decorative applied art, in music, theatre and cinema art.

10. During the 60-80s of the 20th century the national culture has formed the national cultural elite having the rich spiritual-ethical values, distinguishing with the high professionalism according to the profession abilities.

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Milton: The origins and development of Milton's Theology

A.Herbert Luke
New Yor University, United States

luke_edu@gmail.com

Abstract

The writer who engages in acts of online role-play or make-believe is often thought to promote him or herself as an individual agent. However, when members of Pluralism's role-play communities engage in play, they create scenes together that prompt surrender of authorial agency. In doing so, they engage in transindividual work, which allows them to work across, among, and between other entities until the boundaries of the self become porous rather than fixed.

Keywords: Milton Fan community; pluralism, theology

Introduction

While the founder of the microblogging network Pluralism, David Karp, created his network in order to allow viewers to share concise bits of texts, film, and images, some users on this network have chosen to compose posts with significant word counts (Howard 2012). Many of these posts are by fans coauthoring narrative threads—threads that act as a hybrid of fan fiction and online gaming—as they transmit responses back and forth. This practice is most commonly known as role-play (also abbreviated rp). While Pluralism role-play has previously been described as a hybrid of fan fiction and online gaming (see McClellan 2013), the unique quality in role-play is the synergy created when strangers surrender authorial agency in favor of the improvisational process of play. This surrender comes, in part, from the divisions of selfhood performed online—divisions labeled as mun, muse, and anon.

Pluralism role-play is unique because the players involved differentiate be-

tween the mun and muse. A mun, short for the mundane, refers to the author who creates and maintains the Pluralism account. Like a Twitter or LiveJournal user, the mun will select the basic blog design, the information on a short biography, and the handle that will be used to attract other role players on this same interface. The muse is the character(s) portrayed in role-play. Muses are often characters from the mun's favorite stories from film, television, literature, games, or graphic novels. If the mun is a fan of *Grey's Anatomy* (2005–), for example, he or she will select Meredith Grey as muse and then select an icon, or face claim, of Ellen Pompeo, who plays Grey.

If another role player wishes to engage someone's muse, he or she will submit a starter, which launches a dialogue between the characters. This dialogue will be housed primarily on Pluralism's ongoing dashboard of posts, or its feed. Unlike other role-playing scenarios where the characters and game moderators place most of their energy into world building and clear adherence to canonical interpretations of characters, independent role players on Pluralism create new scenes of interaction between characters, ones that often transcend the canon or established narrative of a given universe. For example, some place characters from different universes into the same dialogue, creating an intertextual moment between the Meredith of *Grey's Anatomy* and one of the angels from the television show *Supernatural* (2005–).

Additionally, role players on Pluralism occasionally perform the role of anons, which gives them a third option to consider when they engage in dialogue. When one player wishes to interact with another player without revealing her username, the role player will submit feedback via the inbox in order to share admiration for another person's writing or performance of character. By submitting information anonymously, one player may also ask another player questions without fear of rejection. The anon option acts as an invitation to other players, players who might be too shy to approach a new player outright but who wish to offer narrative challenges or ideas. In allowing anons to communicate with her, the mun shows how willing she is to surrender to the unpredictability of encounters with other players.

Current theory and past scholarship

Role players on Pluralism, rather than capitalize on individual potential, embrace moments of humility in their encounters with others, allowing them to do what Brian Massumi (2014) and other scholars have referred to as transindividual work. Transindividualism may be defined as a phenomenon during which players work beyond, across, within, and among boundaries of self until such boundaries become porous, although, as in the case of Pluralism, they are not completely erased.

As stated above, role players on Pluralism typically refer to themselves (the authors) self-consciously and ironically as the mundane, or mun. When answering questions or prompts as the mun, the readers get a glimpse into the daily lives of the writers who author scenes. Conversely, when executing a fictional exchange among characters, the muses are in charge.

A somewhat common description of the mun and muse interaction is one in which the mun acts in opposition to the fictional muse she attempts to control. This phenomenon echoes Latour (2005), who describes the limits of human agency in terms of puppets and the master who holds the strings. He extends the analogy to say that "puppeteers will rarely behave as having total control over their puppets. They will say queer things like 'their marionettes suggest them to do things they will have never thought possible by themselves'" (59–60). Like the puppeteer, the blogger may originally pull the metaphoric strings on her muse, only to find the muse rebel against her original plan. Once a role-play scene begins, the muse's spirit prevails.

This opposition from the muse acts as a humbling device rather than as an obstacle. Even if users deploy such a bifurcation ironically more than seriously, the desire to involve oneself in a loss of agency is worth examination because this phenomenon suggests that writers are moving beyond selfhood and toward something else. This is important because most descriptions of online character work, whether in gaming or in improvisational writing, have often stressed the value of the individual self as empowered. Michelle Nephew (2006) historicizes role-play in her research on identity and desire, stressing its value in psychology where it helps people "achieve greater self-awareness" (122). According to Nephew, role-play provides players with the chance to create "a dream-world of their own creating that affirms their sense of self-worth and power" (127).

Past role-play scenarios in studies of tabletop or live-action role-play also feature a quest for self-empowerment, both in the way they feature leaders and the way certain traits are valued. As Mona (2007) explains, role-play activity in games like *Dungeons and Dragons* features a dungeon master who emcees the game as it unfolds (29–30). Likewise, in another game, *Vampire: The Masquerade,* the storyteller is in control of what happens (Hindmarch 2007, 49). Today's online games build on these experiences, as MacCallum-Stewart (2014) explains. She stresses that online players "have a proactive attitude towards games, which means that they regard them as texts which they have the power to change" (36). Furthermore, she argues that the tabletop gaming traits of "strength, stamina, charisma, intelligence, dexterity, wisdom and constitution" are valued in online scenarios just as they are in *Dungeons and*

Dragons (23). Here again, individual power matters a great deal, even when a player cooperates with a community of others. We return again and again to the idea of "empowering the player-as-creator" (MacCallum-Stewart 2014, 53). Certainly role players, particularly dungeon masters, in such tabletop gaming scenarios are often more concerned with world building than with character development, yet the power required to build a world necessitates a division between the leader and her players.

As stated earlier, Pluralism role-play acts as a hybrid of gaming and fan fiction. Therefore, we might find less emphasis on power or self-worth in studies of online character work where narrative is the objective. However, this is not the case. For example, Osborne (2012) studies narrative role-play happening on LiveJournal, where players "improvise written responses in the course of play" and also "partake of the transgressive elements of fan fiction" (¶2.4). Osborne returns to ideas of the author as commander and storyteller, just like in the tabletop gaming examples mentioned above. Although she emphasizes the development of empathy that allows players to connect to others, she says that such creative work by bloggers is designed ultimately to help players "discover new parts of themselves" (¶5.3). She goes on to explain that partnership, while important, helps individuals overcome "fear and irrational worries" and teaches players how to re-

late to the world around them (¶5.12). Again, this reinforces the benefits gained by the individual, even when that self enters a community of like-minded players. Likewise, in Louisa Ellen Stein's work (2006), the setup on LiveJournal reinforces this notion of authorial control because comments and threads among characters are hosted on one character's page and subject to deletion at any given time. Characters like the Draco Malfoy of her case study also worry about designing their personal diaries so that the look and feel of the page reflect a character in his own right; for example, he says, "I do hope they have my colours in stock" on LiveJournal so that the Slytherin green and silver are featured prominently when others visit the page (246).

Past scholarship in literacy and fan studies has also articulated play as a manifestation of individual agency or self-empowerment. These scholars have taken productive and thorough note of online communities centered on fan fiction writing, role-playing, and the development of avatars (Black 2008; Gee 2007; Johnson 2012; Kaplan 2006; Warren 2013; Williams 2009). Booth's (2008) research is important for documenting early examples of MySpace user profiles that are based on characters from television programming. His article highlights the power of these fans to identify with television characters and "become proprietors of their own textual spaces" (520) as they engage in "identity play" (533). Although Booth (2008)

carefully attends to the fluidity of such practices of character impersonation and how such role-play merges "the real and the simulated" (534), the idea of becoming a proprietor of a space suggests a concrete territorialization of online space, of gleefully planting one's flag in a corner of the Web.

Role-play on Pluralism does not allow its users to plant flags in selected territories as much as it invites them to transcend any singular moment of Web site creation or character impersonation. Because multiple overlaps of characters and partners occur simultaneously, humility and a lack of agency become essential to the player who moves beyond selfhood toward something greater. In *What Animals Teach Us about Politics,* Massumi (2014) explains how transindividualism works by describing animals who engage in acts of playful combat, acts that reveal "active potential not only in the animal who executes [them], but also in the other" (35). Massumi explains further, "When I make the kind of gesture that places me in the register of play, you are immediately taken there as well. My gesture transports you with me into a different arena of activity than the one we were just in. You are inducted into play with me. In a single gesture, two individuals are swept up together and move in tandem to a register of existence" (5). When moving in tandem, two beings no longer operate as master storytellers in their own right but as part of a transindividual flow, or chan-

nel, that requires complete surrender of the ego in addition to community participation.

Methodology

In the spirit of Brittany Kelley's (2016) recent work on cultivating goodwill through online research, I hope to stress my presence as a participant in the Pluralism community and not simply a lurker mining data for publications. My experience with role-play there began in 2013 when I wrote scenes with my first writing partner, who was patient enough to help me understand the difference in the mun and muse terms I saw circulating online. From 2013 to 2014, I was an active member of the *Hannibal* fandom and a participant in Pluralism's role-play communities. Between the years of 2014 and 2016, I role-played more sporadically and continued to archive posts about role-play that interested me. My archive was built around a series of screenshots, which revealed the willingness of players to move beyond ego and work toward transindividual experiences. Over the past 3 years, I have collected approximately 150 to 200 screenshots of moments in which players describe the differences between their mun and muse, articulate what role-play means to them, and/or explain the benefits and drawbacks of anon encounters.

Like other members of this community, my blog was public, and the role-play scenes I coauthored with my partner were often archived or reblogged to an even

wider audience than our initial followers. Although the materials cited here were publicly shared, I make every effort to secure permission from specific muses when I quote directly from their handle or a role-play scene (I also applied for and received Institutional Review Board exemption for this research through my university). In some cases, Pluralism users will abandon a handle and seek an alternate muse quite frequently, which makes it difficult to maintain contact with the role-playing community, as it is constantly in flux. Some of the work that others and I posted occasionally became fan fiction works that we would later submit to places like Archive of Our Own. Other scenes existed purely for the joy of creating something, even if it was temporary, with someone who shared similar passions for certain stories and worlds. While most work was archived according to a specific set of hashtags, other examples of role-play acted as fleeting interchanges between strangers who might never complete the scene at hand.

In order to analyze the screenshots of role-play activity that follow, I engage in what Clifford Geertz has referred to in his ethnographic work as "thick description." Geertz explains that thickness of data results from considerable investment in a community during which the researcher wallows in a "multiplicity of complex conceptual structures, many of them superimposed or knotted into one another, which are at once strange, irregular, and explicit" (1973, 10). In narrowing my data set, I was particularly drawn to moments of role-play that others have referred to as "bleed" (Montola 2010), where "bleeding in" refers to the author's real life influencing the character and "bleeding out" describes the way a character influences the player. Still, I found that such terms alone did not fully account for what was happening on Pluralism, since the act of bleeding itself was compounded by bleeding both in and out of the character while also simultaneously bleeding into one's partner. This led to me to consider how role players embrace humility and willingly forsake individual goals to enter into play.

Because of my own involvement in role-playing, my perception is, no doubt, influenced by the positive experiences I had in my own corner of the Web. A search of the hashtags *role-play*, *rp*, and *mun* or *muse* reveal thousands of posts that exist across scores of fandoms on Pluralism. While I frequently engaged in such searches and made preliminary notes on the basis of how many posts contained references to the mun/muse relationship and how role players engaged with their anon readers, I was still frequently drawn to examples that had some connection to the narratives I enjoyed, and in this sense the examples presented here are not meant to represent all of Pluralism or even all of the role players active there. Additionally, not all role-playing communities facilitate a positive

experience. In some cases, role players have been bullied and/or threatened by anons. Some role players even turn off the anonymous post function to secure their own composing space and avoid such problems. On a less dramatic level, many role players struggle with feelings of isolation when other players refuse to accept their invitations to play. Likewise, some role-play groups on Pluralism, those established by a moderator, are more like the groups of tabletop gaming participants where one person exercises considerable control over a group of players and establishes what could be considered arbitrary rules of engagement. The examples that follow, then, focus on independent role players whose experiences are largely positive. In doing so, I stress the ways in which authors learn to trust others and to surrender agency.

Features and forms of digital role-play

In order to begin a study of Pluralism role-play, it helps to look first at common examples of character identification online, examples that often reinforce the fan as a single role player or agent. For instance, character identification activities on Facebook or other networks where quizzes are found online tell us which character from a given story we identify with most. These moments are designed by fans as well as by producers. Just recently, I took a quiz on Facebook that informed me that I did not just identify with Haymitch Abernathy from *The Hunger Games* but that I *was* Haymitch. In this

case I am told that I "am principled and independent," a loner," and "have my own way of doing things." This result pleases me, so I share it online with my followers (see Williams 2009). Still, as I share this quiz result, I remain Haymitch without a Katniss Everdeen, and this lack of a mentor-mentee bond, according to Massumi's (2014) terminology, would render my Haymitch somewhat impotent.

Other applications also allow users to transform their photos to appear more like a character in the fictional world. Producers behind *The Walking Dead* games and applications also invented a way that fans could "dead themselves." See the result below (figure 1):

Figure 1. *The Walking Dead* "Dead Yourself" application.

By embedding myself in the narrative, I transform my body in a way that is characteristic of zombies in the television show. Here we see the posthuman body (as virtual zombie online) acting as a liv-

ing text meant to advertise and promote a certain story. However, Massumi (2014) explains that to engage in authentic play, one must offer a "ludic gesture" to another, and this gesture remains "impotent unless it captures the other's attention" and envelops them in the scene (35). In the image above, I call attention to myself as icon, allowing others to view me as a specific zombie subject, crystallized in time and space. An approach that moves beyond selfhood demands something more from us; it is always, as Morton (2013) explains in his study of ecology and posthumanism," decisively decentering us from a place of pampered privilege in the scheme of things" (47) rather than featuring our mastery of the world around us. Here, for example, I can insert my own head shot into a zombie template, and I may find the effect or result entertaining, but such an effect does not represent the spirit of true play among multiple partners. To engage fully in play, we must accept that we are no longer in control of the outcome. Again, this is different from role players in Stein's (2006) work, where the Draco Malfoy role player, for example, refers to his LiveJournal as "this dratted thing," something to be supervised and shaped by the writer. No one "dratted thing" encapsulates play in the Pluralism examples to follow; all are consistently evolving texts that move beyond and across any one individual's efforts.

As Petersen (2014) has noted, Pluralism's layout is more horizontal than vertical since Pluralism as a platform has "a lack of territorial boundaries" across different posts and conversations (101) unlike other sites such as LiveJournal, which feature accumulation of notes and comments on an individual site. Less attention is paid to a role player's personal page and more attention is paid to the scene of play. Here, for example, a role player explains on the forum roleplayingconfessionsfromrpers (2016) that the elaborate design of a template is a distraction:

I have a default theme on my blog on purpose and I'm not about to change it. The default theme is so much easier to navigate and read through than most of your fancy themes. If I can see your blog have [sic] tiny font, and a small box for text, And only fancy graphics and music and intelligible formatting, I start to question whether you're in it for the writing or for praise for your first attempt at web design.

Emphasis on personal Web design is distracting for transindividual play rather than helpful. While some muns emphasize design in their presentation of muses, most role-play scenarios feature reblogging alphabetic text from one player to the next without added bells and whistles.

Consider, as an example, part of a role-play exchange between Pluralism users—one role created from Neil Gaiman and

Terry Pratchett's book *Good Omens* (1990) and the other from the television show *Supernatural*. This call-and-response form of writing unfolds as partners build threads that may go on for hours or days at a time. I have placed a part of their script below:

User bibliophileangel's (2013) archive features a dialogue with role player razielangelofsecrets. Razielangelofsecrets writes:

Linked in arms with Aziraphale, Raz fought to not blush at the contact. What was up with her? Was she falling for this handsome stranger and his beautiful sonorous voice? As he talked about his books, she started to get a silly little grin, enjoying hearing him speak so passionately. "It sounds absolutely wonderful." She commented when he stopped talking. For not much, it was more than she imagined. As he opened the door, she could smell old books on the air and it was only because she was already excited about being around Aziraphale that she didn't get a sudden rush. When he called her darling, she turned an interesting scarlet color and tried to hide it by ducking her head. "Um, just some tea if you don't mind."

The response from user bibliophileangel:

Aziraphale smiled as he took in her expression. "So…I take it you like books as much as I do. You don't often see that much enthusiasm in a fellow angel." He quirked an eyebrow at her as he disap-peared into the back room to put water in his self boiling kettle, a gift from his demon friend Crowley. He also prepared his favorite tea set, also a gift from Crowley. He poked his head around the corner, smiling as he took her in. "Feel free to look around at anything that catches your interest."

In such role-play scenes, it is common for one player to, as seen above, "open the door" to a conversation that reveals common interests. As the scene progresses, the players reply specifically to developments conjured by the previous entry, so above we note that Aziraphale "smiled as he took in her expression" and then, in a later comment, encourages the other player to "look around at anything that catches [the player's] interest." Such invitational lines suggest a metacommunicative stance: not only is Aziraphale, the fictional character, inviting Raziel into the world of the narrative, but the two writers are inviting each other into a new platform of correspondence, where they may adapt to the other's needs. What is most significant (as the rest of this project will demonstrate) is how, by the end of the thread, the two writers have become something that is more than just a partnership. Instead they act transindividually, as some form of Aziraphale-Raziel. The two muns are not only bleeding, to use Montola (2010)'s term, into their muses, but they are also simultaneously bleeding into each other. They are being swept up, as Massumi

(2014) suggests, into a tandem of existence.

Massumi (2014) also speaks to this level of engagement by explaining that what he proposes is ultimately "a pluralist activist philosophy" that is the product of an "ecological playing out" (90). In other words, the field of play allows for multiple solutions and multiple meanings that may continually be combined or singled out. At first, accepting a role-play invitation means accepting a specific version of an established (or sometimes original) fictional character, represented by the player's handle. This is important since role players often choose the same character to portray. For example, after the airing of NBC's *Hannibal* (2013–15) many Hannibal Lecter role-play blogs sprung up on Pluralism as a homage to Mads Mikkelsen's portrayal of the character. The handle afteryourdeathormine has a different online reputation than the handle lectercollapsingchurches, which bases its text on the backstory of the character's obsession with the destruction of faith and on the organizing symbol of structural debris. The user explains: "I see this idea of the church collapsing as feeding into the image of a fallen angel. This blog features a journey of transformation rather than a stagnant portrayal of Lecter" (lectercollapsingchurches 2013). This is different from afteryourdeathormine, whose introductory material about the same character features medical disclaimers and attention to the character's posi-

tion as a psychiatrist. She says, "I am not a medical professional. I am not certified to offer medical, psychiatric, or personal advice in any way. This is a roleplay blog—based off a manipulative, abusive, charming character, whom I do not own or in any way represent" (afteryourdeathormine 2013). Her page even offers links to various crisis hotlines for those with mental illness.

This malleability and diversity in character development counters what some scholars say is essential to the role-play experience: fidelity to the original narrative and the characters inside it. As McClellan (2013) argues, "To build a convincing world, characters must speak like their source characters, they must interact with other characters from the show in textually appropriate ways, and they must respond to new situations in ways that are consistent with their televisual counterparts" (143). If we take McClellan's point and apply it to the world of Pluralism, then we must imagine that multiple versions of a canonical character would potentially be frowned upon or dismissed rather than embraced. If fidelity to the original narrative suggests that a singularity is at work and that all players must conform to the verisimilitude of the fictional world at hand, then characters from Gaiman and Pratchett's novel and the television show *Supernatural* have no reason to engage in dialogue. Massumi (2014) further counters this idea of verisimilitude when he describes a situation in

which he might be referring to lectercollapsingchurches and afteryourdeathormine. He says, "One never simply imitates a form, in the sense of conforming oneself to the given form of another being. One can certainly make as if one were effectively imitating. But something else is really going on, unacknowledged and inexpressibly" (82). He goes on to describe the act of a child imitating an animal, specifically a tiger, and notes that the result is surprising: "The child plays the tiger in situations in which the child has never seen a tiger. More than that, it plays the tiger in situations no *tiger* has ever seen, in which no earthly tiger has ever set paw. The child immediately launches itself into a movement of surpassing the given" (83). In other words, lectercollapsingchurches is never just Hannibal Lecter but some other creature formed by transindividual work with other characters. The role player becomes the fictional role to start, but the activation of the ludic gesture changes the original design of the muse chosen.

5. Muns, muses, and anons at play

Most role players embrace powerlessness when they enact scenes with the muse in charge. While the character he or she adopts may be, at first glance, only an alternate identity, it quickly escalates to become something more, and often that something more means looking beyond traditional notions of self. The handle Muse-room acts as an archive of complaints by muses who wish to defy their muns. In one post, the writer simply says, "Muse Problems #11: Having to do things I don't want to do in [role-play] threads" (Muse-room 2013). In this example, a role player, acting as a muse, states that the muse's will operates independently of the author who created her. The muse here expresses frustration because it is trapped inside a system where it must "do things [it] [doesn't] want to do." This idea is not new, of course, since many authors have expressed the sentiment that their characters often write themselves after the narrative engine of a fictional world ignites. However, muses and their authors are not always carried away on a tide of narrative energy; rather, the muse and the mun often act at odds when engaged in transindividual play in the same way Latour's (2005) puppets and their marionettes tolerate each other's whims.

Another meme that circulates on Tumblr and has been reblogged by user alexs-rp-shit (2015) includes a Muppet character in front of a flaming background. In this meme the mun, offstage, cries out "Muse, no!" only to have the Muppet grin evilly and say "Muse, YES!" while the flames rise higher. This would be another example of how the role player perceives the muse acting against the mun's wishes and wreaking havoc. The humor here reinforces the idea that powerlessness and humility are part of the role-play experience rather than something to be policed or avoided. Additionally, the muse's refusal to acquiesce to the

mun's demands is a construct that foreshadows the way the scenes among partners will play out.

Indeed, players encourage spontaneity rather than shy away from it by inviting others to assist in rupturing the normal life of their muse. User Beverly katzon thecase (2013) reblogged a post in which she asked the following: "In the middle of a conversation, my muse begins to cough up blood. How would your muse respond?" The prompt asks for a specific reaction in which her role-play character and another person's character will engage in an inciting moment that could lead to a short or long scene. By accepting the challenge, the mun becomes powerless, first, because she cannot alter the inciting incident but must accept it in good faith from another, and second, she must consider how the character would act in such a scenario, and the character often surprises and humbles the player. One post on user gxnevra-archieve's (2014) site, which generated over 12,000 likes and reblogs, aptly summarizes the dilemma by saying "what the fuck is my muse doing" and signing the line "every rp'er ever." Role player susie1x1 (2016) reblogged a similar statement—"I'm sorry I have no control over them, I just write the thing." This post was also signed "every rper ever." In a sense, this phenomenon speaks to what Massumi (2014) discusses in terms of play. The muse is not simply part of the writer but something that exceeds her or his control.

[5.4] The ludic act, therefore, moves beyond the individual consciousness and becomes, between two players, a "transindividual" enterprise that "involves -esquing gestures that produce greater degrees of copossibility" (Massumi 2014, 42). Again, with the term *transindividual* we recognize that selfhood dissolves in the act of play to reveal a different entity altogether. This idea explains how partners may accomplish what individual role players may not experience in isolation. Reference to the term *esquing* is made to suggest that when one gestures "as a tiger" or "like a tiger," the human act of role-play exceeds the original creature in its design. The same is true when writers take on personalities of their favorite characters and engage in dialogue with others who are esquing or playing in the same fictional world. The role player on Tumblr, unlike the zombie image on Facebook, has the ability to see transindividual work happening among the mun and muse as well as within different threads of role-play with other players.

[5.5] When working with other players, a few guidelines do apply, despite their love for unpredictable moments at play. Most users abhor godmodding, the act of one player trying to control another in a given scenario. Such a practice leads role players to complain publicly on certain crowdsourced blogs about role-play as a hobby. An anonymous post on the handle roleplaying confessions from pers

(2016) expresses frustration about one of her partners: "I don't like role playing with this particular mun. They god-modded an entire thread with me, made one of the characters really OOC [out of character] and I feel no connection roleplaying with them as both mun and muse." A set of crowdsourced role-play guidelines from user destinationrpg (2016) provides this advice: "Your character will never know everything and be able to overhear everything. There are no omnipotent characters." Here the role-play does have a set of guidelines established by moderators, which does occur often in more regimented communities of Tumblr role players, where users may solicit applications and cast a group of users. However, even in the most established groups, this tendency to avoid one player's control over the other reminds us again that one muse does not get to call the shots or act as master over another. Most role players, both the independent ones and the members of groups, shy away from planning and constructing scenes in advance. User thermxdynamicsarchived (2015) has a reblogged post (with a total of 12,668 reblogs and likes) that states:

[5.6] Plotting RPs like—

Partner: let's do this!

Me: i'm ready!

Partner: how we startin

Me: i wish i knew

[5.7] In addition, Tumblr role players invite the participation of a third actor in

their solar system of chosen identities: the anonymous writer, or the anon. The ask function on the Tumblr account includes an anonymous option so that even those with identifiable usernames may hide them by checking the option to post information without leaving a name behind. For example, bloggers who wish to receive feedback on their writing will issue calls to anon readers. The user deadatmyfeet (2013) posted the following message as an invitation: "Go on ANON and *tell me what you think of me.* I do not want to know who it is, at all. Don't tell me who it is, don't give me hints, don't say your screen name. Tell me exactly what you think of me. Don't sugarcoat things. *Don't lie.* If you hate me, tell me why. Tell me what I'm doing wrong. If you like me, tell me why." These anons provide valuable writing advice and creative challenges to help the role players engage in scenes. They also expose the player to potential risk, since the absence of a subject's name or face means that vindictive or hateful messages are sent in addition to productive ones.

Some anon activity circulates in the form of challenges to all members of a certain role-play community. These writing prompts are often referred to as "Magic Anons." In a Magic Anon challenge (often abbreviated as M!A), the player will accept the challenge depending on what the anon asks her or him to do in a future scene.

For example, the *Supernatural* community, in one challenge, lists the various affectations that a muse must confront if they allow the anon to control her or him. The below example is only a partial list of what the entire post offers as prompts.

M!A from SPN Episodes (2013):

Born Under a Bad Sign: muse gets possessed by a demon. It can be a random one or anon can specify who it is (anon tells length).

The Rapture: muse gets possessed by an angel. If they're already an angel, someone else knocks them out of their vessel and takes their place (anon specifies length).

Mystery Spot—Gabriel put muse into a time loop, anon can specify the place/situation, lasts until a Gabriel muse lets them out.

Torn and Frayed—Muse is under Naomi's control and will act like a perfect little soldier, including killing any rebels/enemies of Heaven. Lasts until someone breaks them out of it.

Croatoan—muse is trapped in a town with people infected with the virus. Will they survive?

Frontierland—muse is sent back in time to the Wild West (anon specifies length)

This list complements the theory that play is ideally, as Massumi (2014) suggests with his animal examples, adaptable to new situations. When the role player posts a request that anons choose a writing prompt from lists like the one above, prompts referred to in the community as M!A posts, or Magic Anons, the regular pattern of role-play is disrupted to allow for challenges that the player may not have anticipated. For example, if an anon chooses one of the prompts, she sends the word *Croatoan* to a role player's inbox, and the player must then imagine that his or her "muse is trapped in a town with people infected with the virus." These posts typically set up obstacles for the role player to confront, which are usually described in terms of physical harm or disability to the human form. Examples may also include the practice of making the character blind for 24 hours, causing it to suffer an allergy, or having it follow directions of another person because of mind control or hypnosis. In these exercises, the writer must maintain the identifying characteristics of their role while also meeting the request of the M!A task. Sent by an anonymous writer, the commands are taken seriously even when the one sending the request refuses to identify herself, which is a sign in other communities of cowardice or refusal to accept consequences. The faceless user acts as controller over the role player's fictional persona, thereby creating revelatory moments where the outcome surpasses what could be imagined alone.

Conclusion

Transindividualism suggests that role players on Tumblr are doing more than just empathizing with others when they

join their particular fan communities. They are negotiating and disrupting boundaries of self in unique ways, and such acts require great humility and de-centering of the individual. Most research on role-play focuses on how community participation and interaction ultimately serves the self, sometimes even as a form of therapy. In the past, role-play repre-sented a way for an individual to work through personal problems and fears in a low-stakes environment, and scholarship about play has mostly followed suit in stressing the benefits of the individual who plays pretend.

While role-play does offer therapeutic benefits, the recent actions of Tumblr us-ers show fans of certain narratives mov-ing beyond the need to improve one's own relation to the world. Rather than the world serving the individual, the indi-vidual in these cases serves the world by allowing her– or himself to be swept up in play. A major part of this transindividual work is the acknowledg-ment that world building and narrative is an unpredictable activity: role players do not control their muses or seek to do so. In celebrating this loss of control, the player also opens him– or herself up to other players' needs and strengths while navigating a scene.

The emphasis on authorial loss of agency and power serves as a model for what kinds of collaboration and commu-

nity may eventually be formed without the aid of one dungeon master or story-teller. Even though role-play activity, ei-ther in online settings or in tabletop gam-ing, may seem to be a democratic enter-prise, experience tells us that someone is often in charge of what unfolds in a ludic moment. The egocentricity associated with such leadership positions limits transindividual work because the struc-ture of power intervenes with the creative efforts of players.

Considering transindividualism in fan communities helps us recognize that once the act of play begins, the potential of players expands and surpasses the given constraints of any one ego. Rather than champion the traits of an individual's mind, the energy spent praising the hu-man consciousness may be used to forge meaningful connections across and among ideas and beings. By taking such surprising fields as animal studies into account when approaching fan communi-ties, participants of role-play and re-searchers of their work have opportuni-ties to decenter human understanding to make room for a world where all living things teach us how play may transform us. It is then possible to imagine a reality in which humility and willingness to cede control become indispensable to play and, consequentially, indispensable to other parts of life as well.

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"This is my country": My Rhetoric of Song

Elen M.Bower
Front Range Community College, Westminster, Colorado, United States
webster@cambridge.edu

Abstract

Rafael Bienia's *Role Playing Materials* focuses on three forms of gaming: live-action role-playing (LARPing), mixed reality games, and tabletop games. As a game designer, player, and member of the Digital Games Research Association (DiGRA), Bienia has significant experience in these areas of gaming. Bienia begins *Role Playing Materials* by deconstructing the terminology of play, starting with the idea that "role playing is a hobby for people who enjoy imagining and exploring characters who are challenged with invented tasks in fictional worlds" (13). He points out, however, that any time people imagine they are someone else and consider how they would act or react as that character, they are role-playing. According to Bienia, "gaming" is a construct of games, players, and practical materials. In *Role Playing Materials*, the interconnectedness of games, player culture, and game studies is evident across the text. Bienia sees the research process itself as a role-playing process, which lends nuance to the discussion.

Keywords: County, epistemologia, Milton`s Study

Ontological and epistemological categorization informs Bienia's larger discussion of role-playing and the role-playing process. Central to his research are Latour's concepts of action and actor. Bienia examines human, nonhuman, and material actors and actions in role-playing. In chapter 2, "Methodology and Theory," he notes that action is observable when a network of actors work together: "The pencil does not write without paper or hand, the paper does not show traces of words without pencil or hand, the hand does not write without a writing device or a piece of paper" (23). Rather than defining role-playing materials as single objects or components, Bienia provides a network-based definition that al-

lows him to evaluate the concept across media.

Insights in this text open up further interesting discussion of the permanence of perspective. For example, time restrictions as he worked to inhabit varying perspectives also changed his practices (such as making new or wearing old costumes) (32). His reiteration of Markus Montola's (2005) suggestion that players define game spaces and that they realize the power to do so through character agency makes compelling the juxtaposition and blending of his statuses as participant and observer, player and researcher.

In chapter 4, "Mixed Reality Role-Playing Games," Bienia briefly details the history of merging real and virtual spaces from the 1960s on and explores the 40-year history of tabletop games. Building these histories, Bienia argues that the meaning of role-play is fluid and depends on a range of factors, including individuals, communities, sessions, and games. Given this fluidity, Bienia focuses his work on an exploration of "how…materials (actors) make role playing (agency) work in role-playing games (network)" (37). While Bienia recognizes the classic elements of role-play noted in previous scholarship (narratives, goals, and rules), his focus on role-playing's network of material actors emphasizes the ways that role-playing works. Thus, rather than offering a historical accounting of these games, he engages the games'

materials as collaborative elements with narrative features.

Bienia positions *Role Playing Materials* as a bridge between past and future research. According to Bienia, "Mixed reality technology pushes game development towards a vanishing of a dividing line between the digital and non-digital" (164). He argues that "actor-network theory provides one toolbox to understand these changes" (164). In studying role-playing, Bienia seeks to complement but not duplicate game studies' previously mapped territories and patterns. *Role Playing Materials* is "a dissertation about role playing and materials" and "about materials that are role playing" (169). In key moments, the writing alternates between the perspectives of human and nonhuman materials. In an effort to change *how* we know about role-playing, Bienia both shares his game-playing experience and speculates on what the game experience might be like from the perspective of other materials within the network. During a tabletop game, he personifies nonhuman elements (a lamp, a pencil, and a table) in order to examine the various places and contexts engaged in role-playing.

Bienia argues that the symbolic facilitates play in all role-playing scenarios. Fake blood might be used to represent wounds in LARPs, avatars represent the players in video games, and a map can represent a castle in a blighted kingdom in a tabletop campaign. Detailing his ex-

periences with an Alcyon LARP, Bienia shows how real-life significances inform player decisions. He notes that cosplayers often wear lighter garb for brief indoor events, while LARPers may select different gear to be worn outdoors. Game preparation occurs well before a LARP. During the preparation process, sleep, food, and necessary game items become part of the game's material network, expanding and aiding in the fulfillment of the game's narrative. To this end, the players dirty their new, store-bought clothes, place their canned food in earthenware bowls to make the game feel more realistic, and modify their materials to incorporate aspects of their characters, worlds, and story lines. Thus, human and nonhuman actors are interrelational collaborators and "this distribution of work makes a dichotomy between human and non-human irrelevant as a precondition to know larp" (88–89).

Analyzing the mobile game *Obscurus 2,* Bienia shifts focus to address how role-playing works in mixed reality games (and those augmented to be based in virtual reality) that use smartphones and computers. Bienia touches on game modification and the cost of materials, but focuses most on smartphones. According to him, smartphones allow access to a world beyond the game and are less stable as collaborative actors within role-playing scenarios. For example, the indoor location of one player of the mobile game *Obscurus 2* made it difficult for that

player to receive transmissions and game updates. Consequently, all the players had to integrate the technical problems into their role-playing. Eventually they decided to all move outside. Although the material-material relation required only this small change, the example highlights ways that role-playing's material actors work with narrative actors to construct the game experience (100–101).

Studying the single-player online role-playing game *The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim* (Bethesda Game Studios, 2011), Bienia explores the differences between instrumental and "pretend" play. He argues that the game's prerendered landscape and plot limit the player's possible actions and as a result require more work of the player. The prescribed responses in computer gaming are like those in tabletop games. However, in *Skyrim,* "characters can swim through icy water without effect. Interacting with the cold world does not connect the actor water to character play" (110). Modding, the modification of hardware, software, or game-operating functions, is also covered here. Player communities create and add elements to the core game to enhance the experience of playing. For example, in *Skyrim,* the Hypothermia mod allows weather to be a significant factor affecting armor use and actions like jumping into rivers.

Bienia argues that players define game spaces, but that they realize this power through their interactions with game ma-

terials. For example, he describes his view of *Skyrim* when using the Oculus Rift virtual reality headset:

Every part of the game world falls into the "right place." However, the mushrooms on the tunnel floor are surprisingly big. When playing Skyrim with an LCD monitor, the mushrooms were small and I barely noticed them…Replacing the LCD with the virtual reality display, everything is still in proportion to the body of my character, but as the proportion between the character's body and my body changes…the environment grows and the mushrooms designed for an LCD become larger than life. (116)

Another physical actor, the band holding the virtual reality headset on the player's head, prevents long-term game play because of the discomfort it causes. In this virtual context, the avatar's clothes do not reflect the player's actual clothing. These minor elements are key, Bienia notes, because a "larp network becomes stable when narrative, ludic, and material actors collaborate" (99). When "role-playing games integrate more and more mixed reality technology, these combined networks become more ubiquitous" (121).

Assessment

Time is one boundary in a game, and all play includes edges and landscapes, from a physical map in a tabletop game to the edges of the realm past which an ava-

tar cannot navigate in a video game. *Role Playing Materials* compellingly examines a range of game boundaries, as well as the places where these boundaries are thin. Throughout, Bienia acknowledges the limitations inherent in observing the fluid nature of game play through static moments. He argues that that new game scenarios and changes in materials will inevitably produce different forms of play and game study each time. He concludes that research on any "stable mixed reality role-playing game network has to include more work on relations" because "when materials collaborate in a tabletop role-playing game, materials role-play, too…Researchers who want to understand materials as collaborators in role playing need to expand their understanding of role playing as a process that includes non-human actors" (159–60).

Role Playing Materials argues that in order to understand the complexity of role-playing games, future research must acknowledge relations between narrative, ludic, and material actors. More importantly, these interrelations must be studied without giving any one actor a preferred position. This text prepares the ground for those interested in actor-network theories, game studies, games research methods, the process of play, and even ethical considerations of game materials and manufacture.

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"The plot of Oedipus" (AT 931) in Azerbaijan folk-lore and its psycho-semantically essence

Ph.D. Safa Garayev

ANAS Institute of Folklore

safagara@mail.ru

Abstract

In the article the tale texts collected from the Azerbaijan territories have been drawn into the research work on the base of the psycho-semantically essence of the "the plot of Oedipus" (AT 931). Being the most sensible theme in Azerbaijan society and showing it with many symbolic behaviors the incest taboo unlike the social life is disordered in these investigated tales. In the texts of these tales collected in the Azerbaijan territories in different times disordering of the incest taboo happens first of all between the sister and the brother, later it happens between the mother and the son. Looking through the tale plots presented in the context of the psychoanalytic analysis practice of "the plot of Oedipus" it is clear that these tales have been formed on the base of the "child position". And it has been reflected in the text in the form of describing of the father being one of the main characters of "the plot of Oedipus" as the culprit of all anti-social and unethical problems. From the texts presented by us it is clear that the hero of the tale has been born as a result of the disordering the incest taboo of the sister and the brother and later he has been left to die. In the article the fact of the baby being born as a result of the disordering the incest taboo, being moved away from the chain (or from the family environment) of the social relations by the parents to be left to die and later being alive and not recognizing his mother to marry her is kept in the attention as the main fact in the explanation of the

events semantics (we mean the fact of disordering the incest taboo between the sister and the brother with the fact of disordering the incest taboo between the mother and the son).

Key words: Plot of Oedipus in Azerbaijan folklore, incest taboo, AT 931, Oedipus Complex, Maiden Tower, Adam and Eve, taboo in Azerbaijan society, Oedipus and son's point of view.

Introduction

One of the plots kept in the focus of the attention of the scientists' in the world folklore-study is the 931st plot in the Aarne-Thomson catalogue. This plot collected from the different regions of the world is also called "the plot of Oedipus" according to its internal essence, conflict level, inherent meaning which has the common with the drama "King Oedipus" by Sophocles. It is necessary to note that in 1897 Freud wrote the first information about the psychological conflict which was later called the "Oedipus complex" in his letter to the doctor Wilhelm Fleiss from Berlin. In that letter he had written about the child's love to his mother and the child's jealousness to his father and tried to ground it on the base of the drama "King Oedipus" by Sophocles: "I have found, in my own case too, [the phenomenon of] being in love with my mother and jealous of my father, and I now consider it a universal event in early childhood, even if not so early as in children who have been made hysterical. (Similar to the invention of parentage [family romance] in paranoia-heroes, founders of religion). If this is so, we can understand the gripping power of Oedipus Rex, in spite of all the objections that reason raises against the presupposition of fate; and we can understand why the later "drama of fate" was bound to fail so miserably (Letter of Freud to Fliess)". Later having the results from the psychoanalytic investigations based on the drama "King Oedipus" Freud named his famous theory as the "Oedipus Complex" in 1910, and according to this complex he explained the son's psychological reasons on the base of the son's love to his mother and the son's jealousness to his father as the enemy or the rival. Though on the one hand the psychosomatically essence of the meant plot was explained, on the other hand the essences of the emotional-internal conflict which was necessary for the development dynamics of the human psychology were discovered. The complex choosing the target of the explanation of the emotional reality of the human in the first periods develop-

ing little by little became one of the main explaining models of the social-public relations in the anthropological context. One of the scientific branches investigating the psychoanalytic theory widely is folklore-study that at this time the investigation of the psycho-semantic essence the semantically content of the different cultural facts, the implication conflict level, the gained peculiarities in the process of overturning the psychological reality into the text reality and etc. form the base of these applications.

It is necessary to note that the plot of Oedipus has been drawn into the research work on the base of the folklore materials of some nations such as gypsy (Karpati, 1995, 23-28), alur (Southall, 1995, 35-39) bushman (Biesele, 1995, 39-45), oceania (Lessa, 1995, 56-76), burma (Spiro, 1995, 203-215), etc. and a lot of meaning levels of this plot have been discovered.

Taking into the consideration the special interest of investigating in the world folklore-study the 931st plot in the Aarne-Thompson catalogue collected from the different regions of the world and the valuable nations we'd like to draw the variants of this plot collected from the Azerbaijan territories into the research work. Before explaining the plots and motifs in the tale texts we'd like to look through the plot

of both texts in a short form. One variant of this tale including the incest motif is the Azerbaijan tale "Chay avarasi" ("The River Loafer") published in 1890 in the journal SMOMPK. The plot of the tale is as the following:

1. After the death of the just king and his whole family, only his little son and daughter survived. As the king was fair the population not wanting to change his generation decided to rule the kingdom on behalf of that girl and boy. As the brother and the sister were living together in the palace, one day the Satan seduced them. The sister was pregnant form his brother and they had a son. Refusing the child the sister and the brother threw the baby into the great river. In order to repent the brother went to Jerusalem. But the sister continued to rule the kingdom.

2. A miler found the baby thrown into the river and brought him up. But playing with his peers the child was called as "Chay avarasi" ("The River Loafer"). Though the miler wanted not to tell the truth to the child, but the child protested and the miller was forced to tell the truth. The miller confessed finding the baby in the river. Learning the truth in order to investigate himself he started to travel.

3. Travelling a lot Chay avarasi arrived in the kingdom which was ruled by a woman. As ruling the kingdom

was very difficult for the woman the population of that country decided to marry her with a man, in order to replace her with him gathering in the square they threw lots. Though the lots showed Chay avarasi the population didn't agree with it, because they thought that a strange man whose generation was unknown couldn't be their king and they sent him away. But every time the lots showed Chay avarasi and thinking that he was sent by God they married him with the queen. Crowning Chay avarasi the population chose him as a king. The new king was very humanist and began to rule the kingdom fairly. The king and the queen loved each other very much and they had two children from that marriage.

4. One day the king saw that the queen opened a box with a key and took paper out of it, read and began to cry, later she put that paper into the box and closed it. When the king asked about it the queen didn't confess it. The king wanted to read that paper and asked for the key insistently. The queen answered that she had lost the key. The king breaking the box opened it and read the paper. In the paper was written that the story about the baby born from the marriage of the brother and the sister, then that baby was thrown into the river by the parents.

Learning everything from the paper the king and the queen understood that they were the mother and the son. The king said to the queen that the happening of the events in such way were not their sin. In order to wash his sin the king left the kingdom. Putting on his old clothes he left the kingdom and the queen.

5. Travelling a lot Chay avarasi saw a magnificent house near the sea. Being hungry and tied he asked for a shelter. Having a shelter the boy told all events to the host of the house. Then he asked the host if there was an island in the sea where nobody lived, he wanted to go and pray there till the end of his life.

6. The host answered that he knew such island and with Chay avarasi's request the host took him there. There Chay avarasi asked the host to bind him with the chain in the cave and to throw the key to the sea. If that key was on the surface of the water it would mean that all his sins were absolved. The host fulfilled his wishes and returned his house.

7. Long time passed, the host forgot about leaving the boy in the island. One day the catholicon of a country died. The population of that country wanted to choose the new catholicon, they threw the lots and it showed the sea. In order to find the new catholicon

twenty people came to that host and asked him about the person living near the sea. Suddenly the host remembered about the young man binding with a chain and left in the island. Then he looked through his notebook and saw that thirty two years had passed. In spite of all they decided to go to see that man. Arriving at the island the host told his slaves to go to fishing and prepare meal for them, but he and twenty people went to the cave. Entering the cave the host saw that Chay avarasi got older and the food near him also was there as it was many years ago. Twenty people greeting and kissing his hands told Chay avarasi that they wanted him be their catholicon. Suddenly one of the slaves came and told that there was a key in the mouth of the caught fish. Hearing it Chay avarasi began to cry that his sins had been forgiven by God. Then he agreed to go with them anywhere.

8. The twenty people brought Chay avarasi and chose him as their catholicon. From many parts of the world many people came to listen his preaching and found comfort. His former "mother and wife" also came and asked him to forgive her sins. The catholicon not letting her know him forgave her sins (SMOMPK, 1890, 184-189). The other tale text corresponding the plot of Oedipus has been published in the book "West group dialects and accents of the Azerbaijani language" in order to present the dialect facts. The plot of the tale is as the following:

1. One day a king said to his vizier: "How do you think when it is pleasant to talk when the man is drunk or sober?" The vizier answered that he couldn't answer the question then.

2. The king and the vizier went hunting. They walked till the darkness. With the vizier's advice they decided to spend the night in different houses. The vizier came to a house, knocked the door, the door was opened by a girl, the vizier asked her if he could stay for a night there as a guest. The girl asked about it from the hostess. Accepting the guest from the God the hostess agreed, but she told the guest not to tell anything about what he would see. Entering the room the vizier saw that there was a grave in the corner of the room. There were candlesticks in each side and a lamp in the middle of the grave. Opening the second door the vizier saw that there was also a grave in the corner of the room. There were candlesticks in each side and a lamp in the middle of the grave. The vizier opened the third door. They entered the hostess' room. The hostess invited the vizier to the supper, having supper he went to bed.

3. The vizier told everything the king what he saw in the house and invited the king to see everything with his eyes. The vizier again told the host that he would like to stay for a night with his brother as it was late. Again the hostess accepting them as the guests from the God and told them not to tell anything what they would see in the house.

4. After supper the king asked about the graves in the house and the hostess remembering them their agreement became very angry. The hostess called the executioner to kill the guests. Suddenly the guests put off their hunter clothes and the hostess saw that they were the king and the vizier. The executioner told that he didn't have to kill the king and deviated from the command. Recognizing the king the hostess began to tell the secret of the events:

5. "The swindlers of the city took my brother to the drinking party. My brother returned to the house at night and he was very dead drunk. He encroached on me that night. In the morning I told everything to him and remembering everything he took the dagger and killed himself.

6. Being afraid of the people's reprimand giving birth to the baby I took the child and went to the forest; I put the baby on the stump and left him.

Turn out to be, the wood-cutters and wood-choppers found the baby and brought him up. And one day seeing each other we felt in love. We became a wife and husband in married state. One day when he was having bath I saw a birthmark on his shoulder. I told the happened events to my son and he killed himself. Now every evening nine girls come to my house, they share my grief, we weep with sorrow and then they leave.

7. Remembering the question asked by the king about the drinking the vizier told the king that was the answer to his question. The vizier said to the king: "Your Honor, you asked me when it was pleasant to talk when the man was drunk or sober" The answer to this question is told by the hostess" (West group dialects and accents of the Azerbaijani language, 1967, 281).

Looking through these tale texts collected in different times the closeness between their inherent content and semantically essence is clearly seen at first sight. Both of the tales including the incest fact give the unique information in order to understand the psycho-semantic essence of this problem. First of all let's note that as the incest fact is very strict taboo in Azerbaijan society there is no any open information about this problem in the social life. But many tale and legend

texts create the great opportunity to look through the semantically content of this problem. For example, there are many tale texts belonging 512B plot in the Aarne-Thompson catalogue showing the disordering of the incest taboo in the context of the father's desire. Besides it, in many variants of the legend "Giz galasi" ("Maiden Tower") which is very popular in Azerbaijan territory the incest motif as "father being in love with his daughter" is reflected very clearly. But in none of them the father's desires inclined the incest are not realized and instead of this desire he is punished with the death. From these tale texts it is clear that the disordering case of the incest taboo in the social relations being even hypothetic in the folk thinking, it is the behavior act having the equivalent with the "death" punishment. But in the mythical texts such as "Adam and Eve" described as the first human couple of the world the case of not corresponding "with the death" of the incest act is an exception. As being perceived (the only possible variant of the human increase) as a part of the nature the first human couple belonging to the mythological period where the social relations unformed such punishment is not concerned to them.

Let's note that in order to avoid the supposition of disordering the incest taboo in social relations there are many realized symbolic acts and behaviors, but we don't want to discuss this problem widely. But in Turkey Turks which belonging to Oghuz group as Azerbaijan Turks are also in this group, a custom can be very important according to displaying the sensitiveness to the incest taboo of the society. The marriage form called "taygeldi" embraces the marriage relations among the stepbrother and the stepsister. In this kind of the marriage which met very rarely the marriage act of the stepsiblings (a widower's child with a widow's child) and the widows' own marriage are realized. "In such marriages, generally, children are married firstly and then the widows (parents) are married" (Abali, 2011, 82). "According to a belief if before stepsiblings' marriage the widows' marriage is realized it is said so: "The stepsiblings will not have children". Due to the other thought when the widows are married before the stepsiblings the stepchildren will be considered as a sister and a brother, that is why the stepsiblings must be married before them" (Balaman, 2002, 45). As it is seen in order not to disorder the incest taboo in the marriages which has not blood relatives such high sensitiveness is shown. Before not looking through the content of many symbolic behav-

iors realized during the marriage in order to disorder the incest taboo we can say that this prohibition (taboo) stands on the base of many symbolic behavior actions in traditions of Azerbaijan nation as in all humanity societies. Because the incest taboo being the norm defining phenomena in the social behaviors and relationship ties has been declared holy as the most important relation level of the cosmic world. But in two tales mentioned above we witness the realization of the incest relation prohibited in the social level and it creates the situation of the profound investigation of the relation to the incest fact of the society. As the incest fact is the prohibited subject in the social life, the society demonstrating the high sensibleness to the protection of this prohibition in the behaviors and norms, disordering the incest taboo being the product of the collective thought in the texts mentioned above show the necessity of its essence explanation.

In the tale mentioned above the incest taboo taking part in the description of the tale is disordered in the social environment and here it is said about the punishment given not by the society, but the punishment given by the human. Before analyzing the problem in the context of the incest problem we'd like to mention the fact of "putting a curse" (rough treats that are used to emphasize persuasions of perseverance or persuasiveness) used in Turkey Turks. It means in order to realize an aggressive aim the human gives such curse or abuse to himself: "If I (don't) do that work let my mother be my wife". As it is seen in the text being topical in the behavior context of "putting a curse" it is also said about the perceiving the incest fact as the punishment. In this case the person putting a curse notifies his agreement to the hard, the disordering incest event in the case of disordering his aim. So the abusing person's disordering probability of his aim turning into the taboo together with the incest is also mentioned. Such word combination, in fact, wants to bring the notice the insistence of the person "giving a curse" in his aim highly and the impossibility of the disordering this thought (as disordering the incest taboo is impossibility). Though the semantics in the social context of the word combination gives a chance to explain the abuse text, this text's psycho-semantic essence in the Freudian context and the explanation of the process of turning into the language factor in the form of "abusing own self" passing from the taboo borders of the consciousness (even in the negative form) of this relation can show the different

scenery: here the secret wish to the mother turning into the negative form and so "deceiving" the social censorship becoming topical in the aggressive situations, in the negative form is the language formula and the folklore event. But here one of the interesting points is the conformity of the relation level in this abuse seen as "the punishment to own self" and the relation levels of the tale texts introduced by us.

The text mentioned above is different from the drama "Oedipus" by Sophocles. From that plot it is known that after the information about the priest's killing the father of the birth baby and marrying his mother Oedipus is left to die. But at the end of the plot the hero not wanting and not knowing the information given by the priest finds its affirmation. Sometimes the investigators have not approached to the explanation of the plot of Oedipus putting the father in the enemy position in the love context of the son to the mother and the wish being in the father's position mono-semantically. Alan Dundes also paid attention to Hall's approaching to the myth Oedipus. Hall doesn't accept this plot in the context of Oedipus complex as Oedipus does not recognize his father and mother. It means Oedipus doesn't recognize his parents that in the love context to his mother defining his father as the enemy to pass his place. According to Alan Dundes's thought Hall doesn't understand the nature of Freud's instinctive conception and notifies that "We have already noted that Hall did not accept the validity of the Oedipus complex on the grounds that Oedipus did not know his father or mother. It is pretty clear from this that Hall did not have a firm grasp of the nature of the Freudian unconscious. Folklore offers a socially sanctioned outlet for the expression of often taboo ideas. Hence it is essential that Oedipus did not know (consciously) that he was killing his father and marrying his mother. If he did, there would be no plot, no drama" (Dundes, 1997, 7). Such kind of remark can also be noted about the plot of tale texts introduced by us. It means the boy in the tale doesn't recognize his mother that to marry his mother in the context of the Oedipus complex. In this case Alan Dundes's thoughts have the special meanings: the folklore offers the models in order to personify the thoughts and ideas being taboo in the society, one of them is the Oedipus wish being the taboo in the social environment. In order to get rid of the social taboo the incest wishes of the boys become topical in the texts as the steps "obscurity", "unrecognizability his

parents". If it was not so then the incest wish not getting over the social taboo couldn't become the folklore plot and the folklore text.

We think that as in the plot of Oedipus in the tales mentioned above the fact of the guilty father's absence near the mother when the son marries to his mother is also one of the problems must be paid attention. In the text called "Chay avarasi" we see that when the son marries to his mother the father disordering the incest taboo leaves his wife (or his sister) for the sacred place, Jerusalem in order to forgive his sins, but in the second text the father encroaching with his sister in the drunken situation has killed himself. Such facts in the tales must be turned out as the structure of the Oedipus complex according to the psycho-semantically view. However in the drama "Oedipus" the hero killing the father to pass his place the inciting emotional reaction here it could get to leave the mother putting the guilty semantics on the father. In both tale texts the reaction sourced from the incest wishes connects the hero just with the mother in the different situations context. In the tale "Chay avarasi" in order to find his generation the way takes the hero to his mother whom he didn't recognize, but in the second tale the woman being loved by his son is his real mother. Here to marry with the mother in the context of "obscurity", "unrecognizability" must be understood as the model offered to express the wish Oedipus being taboo in the social context of the folklore.

Paying attention to the tale text it is clear that the incest wishes in the plot have been estimated in two points: 1. In the part covering with the "obscurity" and "unrecognizability" between the relations of the mother and the son we become the witness of the plot actualized the Oedipus wishes. 2. Disappearing of the "obscurity" and "unrecognizability" between the mother and the son or after knowing the realities the social norms (and its punishment principle) in the occurred events attract the attention as the main defining criterion.

In the model of "obscurity" and "unrecognizability" of folklore the opportunity created the realization of the Oedipus wishes creates the opportunity to realize the incest wishes of the son to the mother and till this part of the plot we see the happy life of the sides. But the emotional calmness arising from the actualizing of the Oedipus wish ends with the appearance of the real sides of the relations between the mother and the son. Discovering the realities (it means discovering the husband and wife as the mother and

the son) are completed with the estimation of the incest relations in the social context between the mother and the son. As a rule discovering the reality in the folklore happens with the appearance of a thing or a mark carrying the signs from the past. In the first tale mentioned above the kept letter becomes the cause of the appearing the reality, but in the second tale it is appeared with the help of the birth mark. In both tales this case shows itself with the leaving of the son his mother that is the main functionary of the Oedipus wishes. Here one fact is also interesting. In the tales just the child leaves (in the first tale plot it is shown with arresting herself in the cave, but in the second tale it is realized with the death of the child (the child kills himself)) the mother with being conducted to the social context of the relations. It is not accidental either. Appearing of the Oedipus complex on the base of the emotional experiences of the son is completed just punishing himself after the reality discovers. Because in the logic of the text the side arising the guilty situation becomes also the side being punished at the end. That is why the word combinations such as "to kill himself / herself" and "to arrest himself / herself in the cave" must be accepted as the symbolic equivalents attracting the attention as the punishment to the Oedipus wishes in the texts mentioned above.

The most important point in the tale texts mentioned above is here the reflection of the double incest fact unlike the plot of Oedipus. From the tale text we see that before the case of disordering the incest taboo between the son and the mother this taboo has disordered between the sister and the brother and in its turn it became the cause of the hero leaving his sister for Jerusalem in order to be forgiven, but in the second tale the brother disordered the incest taboo had killed himself. As it has mentioned above though the act of disordering the incest taboo between the sister and the brother has the same semantically essence with the act of disordering the incest taboo between the mother and the son their realizing conditions are different in the text. It means the taboo covered with the "obscurity" and "unrecognizability" and having actualized in the text, the taboo between the sister and the brother is described in the text as the case of disordering the definite social relations. It is described in the tale "Chay avarasi" as "to be seduced by satan", but in the second tale as "the swindlers made the brother drunk hard". As it was mentioned above the case of disordering the incest taboo between the sister and the brother (or

not having this taboo from the beginning) the culture doesn't inflict a punishment in the level of the first human couple was created. Unlike that defending the incest taboo between the brother and the sister is one of the strictest norms in the social norms. But the word expressions such as "to be seduced by Satan" and "the swindlers made the brother drunk hard" expressed by the text teller also serve estimating this taboo disordering as the deviant action. It means with the help of these word expressions the side disordered this taboo is declared as the gone beyond the social norms and the instigations of disordering such kind of the taboo are brought to the notice as the cause of the disturbing behaviors the same man undergoing the different extraneous influences. But here the most interesting point is determining the connection and the attitude of disordering the taboo between the mother and the son with the disordering the taboo between the sister and the brother. The investigations in the branch of psychoanalytic searches show that the texts about disordering the taboo between the son and the mother are mostly formed on the base of the "son's point of view". And in the tale texts describing the father as the guilty is shown as the result of the "projective inversion". In this case if we consider the introducing tale text mentioned above on the base of the son's point of view then the essence of the problem can be explained more clearly. And let's note that in the text the position expression may not form the timing with the development dynamics of the plot. It means in the same tales the expression of the son's point of view in the text doesn't begin to actualize with its presence in the text. The son's point of view being the cause of the projective inversion (in the text as a result of the projective inversion the guilt arising from the son's wishes is introduced as the father's guilt) begins to happen from the beginning that it is completed with the introducing of father as the guilty in the beginning of the plot. The result of this point of view is that the father being the main functionary of the taboo disordering behavior between the sister and the brother is placed to the destructive norm position in the social norms (it means in the context of the known and clear relations) that according to the semantically content it serves replacing in the acuter censure position the father's guilt covering to the "obscurity" and "unrecognizability" actualized than the incest disordering relation between the mother and the son.

We'd like to notify the attitude to another problem on the base of the tale texts mentioned above. As it is known, in Azerbaijan Turks also having the father family peculiarity the relationship corresponds the model called "Description relationship system" by the anthropologists. In this system the brother of any human's mother (maternal uncle), the father's brother (paternal uncle) and his father are expressed with different relationship terms. At the same time the father's sister (paternal aunt), the mother's sister (maternal aunt) and the mother are also named with the different names (Havilland, 2008, 529). Looking through the tale perspectives mentioned above we become the witness of the collapsing of the characteristic family and relationship system for the social norms. From the text we see that as a result of the disordering the incest taboo the relationship attitudes being characteristic to the social norms lose their meaning and power. In both texts as a result of the disordering incest taboo by the brother and the sister the children are born, later those children marry to their mothers, and the following scenery appears: a "father" is also an uncle (as the mother's brother), a "mother" is also an aunt (as the father's sister). In the text as a result of the disordering the incest taboo such

chaotic order created in the comparison with the social norms assumes to affirm "the incest taboo" being the main status determining principle of the society. From the plot we see that disordering of this taboo can lead to disturbing all relation system and order in the society. In this case "the plot of Oedipus" in the catalogue Aarne-Thompson (AT 931) can be estimated as the text giving the reflection of the social order, the description of the social chaos.

Conclusion

As it is known one of the most important functions of folklore is to present the definite models and methods in order to express the anti-social and unethical feelings, thoughts and behaviors. In this case the expression of the incest taboo considering the taboo for the social norms can be estimated in the model explained above in this function context of the folklore. As a result of the investigation it is clear that the poetics of the tales mentioned above has been formed on the base of "the boy's point of view". And it is completed with the appearing of the semantic difference between the first taboo disordering (the sister and the brother) and the second taboo disordering in the investigated texts describing the disordering incest taboo case: though knowing each other as the

member of the social relation chain the sister and the brother disorder this taboo, but the mother and the son not recognizing each other, as a result of child's being far from the social relation chain this event happens. And in itself it became the cause of being placed in the much acute censure position the case of the disordering the incest taboo between the sister and the brother.

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About the Editor

Laura L. Knoppers is Professor of English at the University of Notre Dame. Widely published on seventeenth century literature, politics, religion, and visual culture, she is most recently the author of *Politicizing Domesticity from Henrietta Maria to Milton's Eve* and editor of *The Oxford Handbook of Literature and the English Revolution.* Her Oxford scholarly edition of Milton's Paradise Regained and Samson Agonistes won the 2008 John Shawcross Award from the Milton Society of America. Knoppers is past chair of the Northeast Milton Seminar and past president of the Milton Society of America.

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